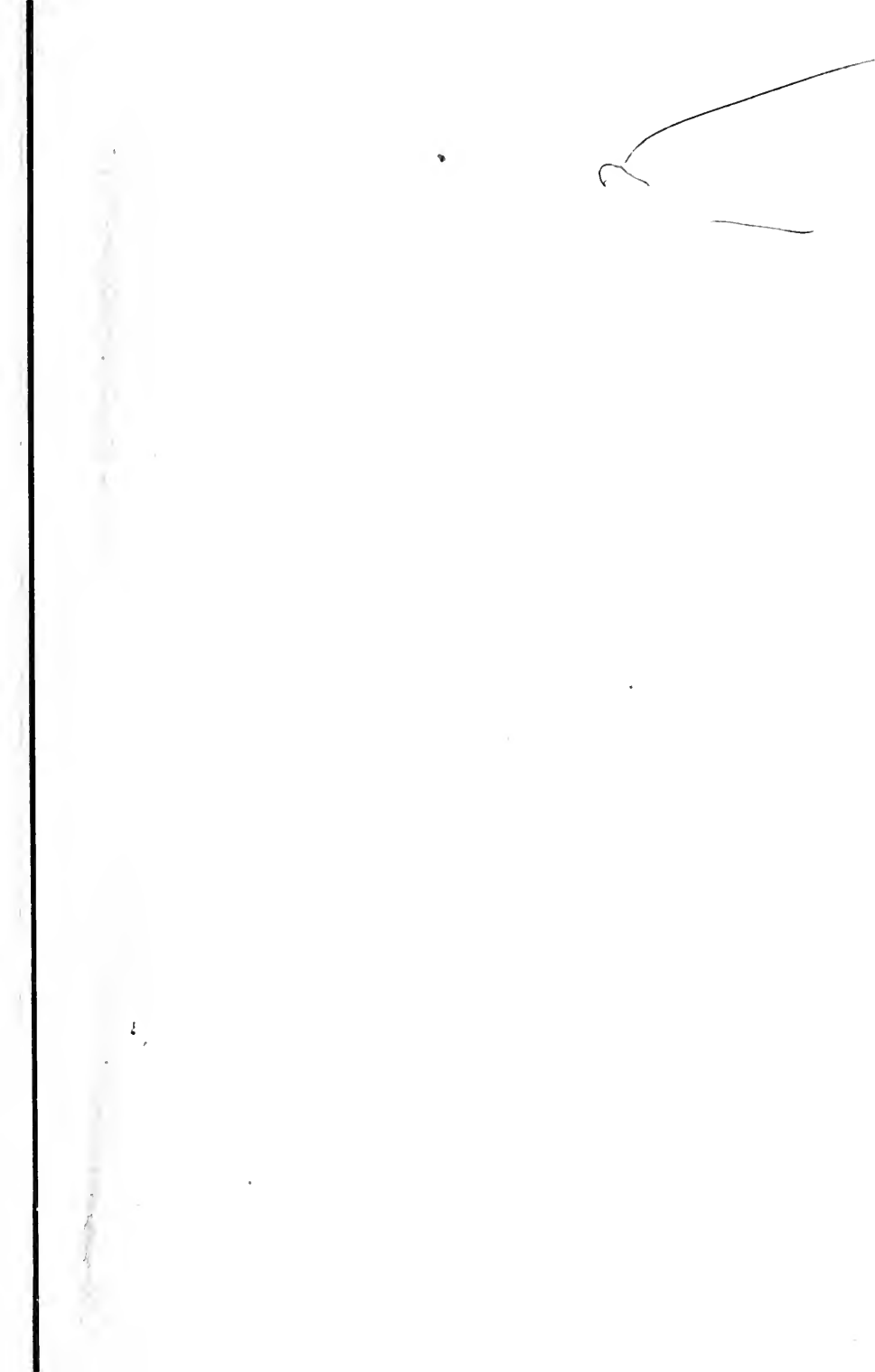


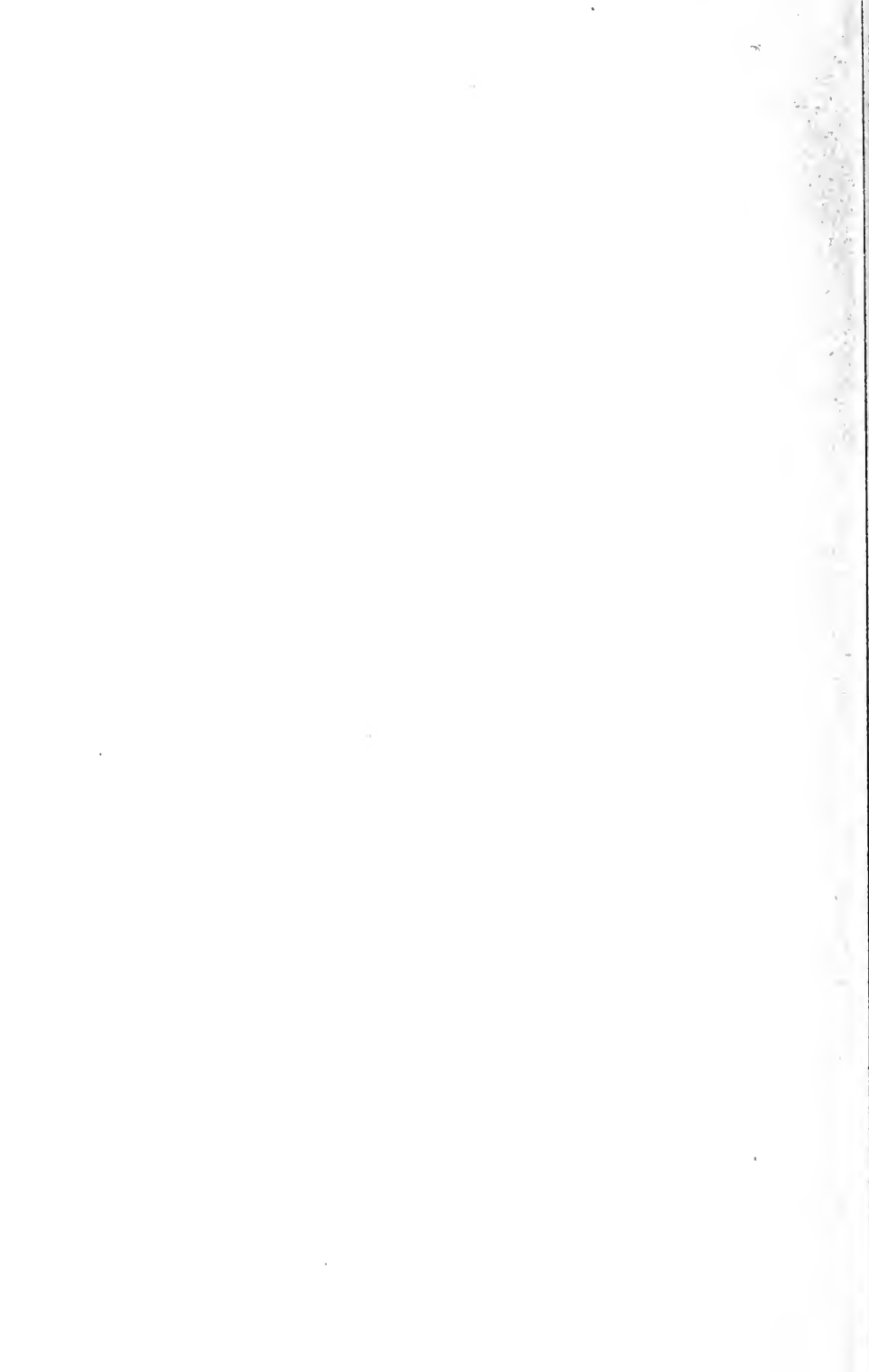
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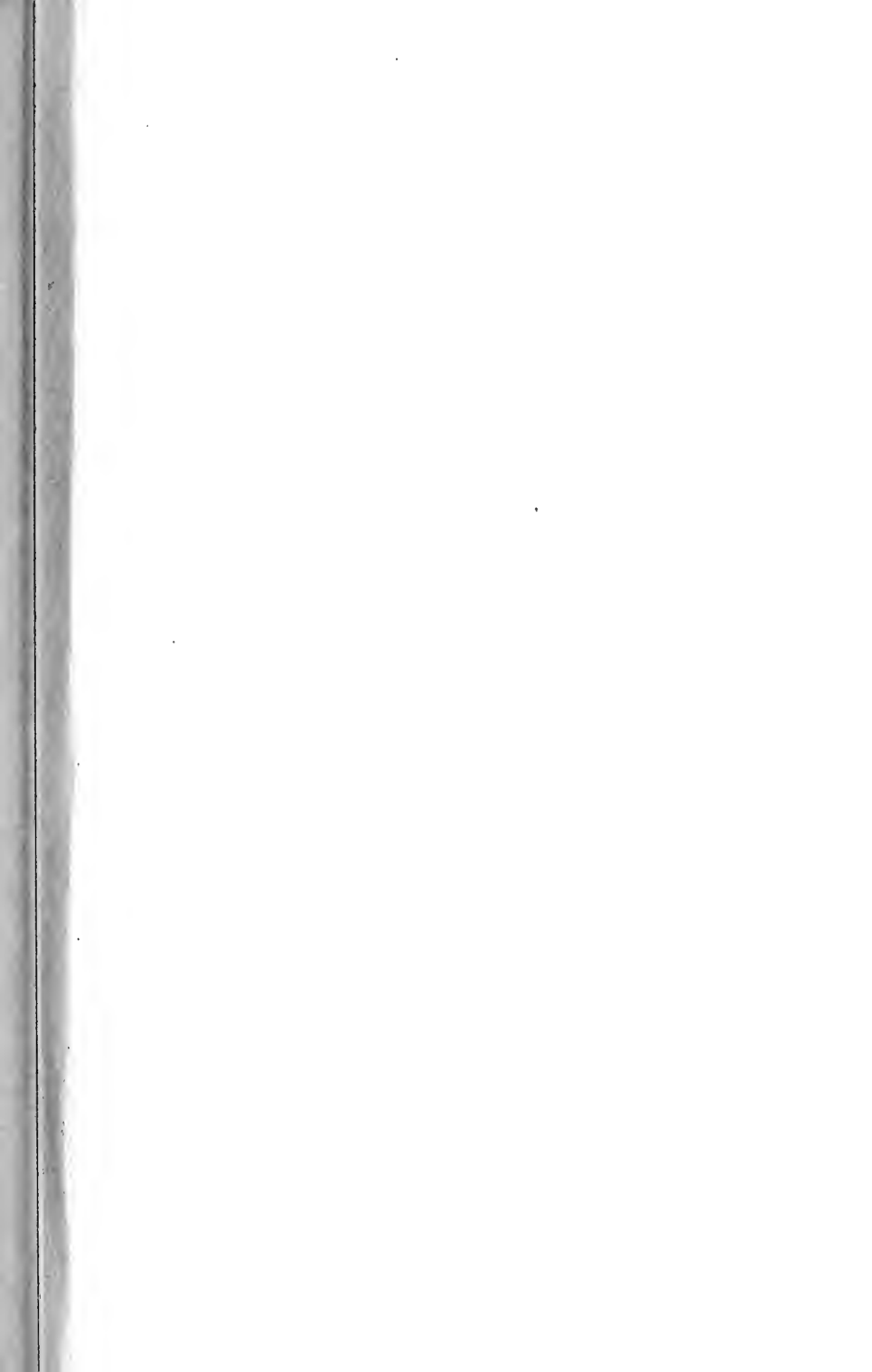
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*With kind regards.*

T H E

*W.*

# LOGIC OF STYLE

BEING

*AN INTRODUCTION TO*

## Critical Science

By WILLIAM RENTON

L O N D O N

L O N G M A N S, G R E E N, & C O.

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# INTRODUCTION

BY WAY OF PREFACE.



It is a cumbrous disadvantage for an Introduction to a Theory of Style, that Style, as a science, stands so closely in interconnection with other sciences. This connection, on the one hand, is one of coincidence, on the other, of analogy. In the one instance, the science seems to support itself on the facts of the correlative sciences, in the other, on their principles. And so it is forced into relations that are too obvious to be repudiated, even while they are too numerous not to interfere with its free expansion as an independent system.

This disadvantage, the most awkward that can arise for any theory claiming for its phenomena a distinct genesis and a distinct economy, is at the same time one of the least obvious. Not that the multiplicity in the relationships of Style to other subjects has been overlooked; since it is the too common experience that mere redundancy of suggestion tends often to confound and perplex. Besides, from the opposite point of view, it could not fail to be noted, that, in the midst of any such redundancy, a certain proportion of ease must have attended the work of recombining materials which other sciences had discovered, or of organizing fresh

materials according to rules which they had suggested. The difficulty of the case is hidden by a prior misunderstanding as to the true scope of Style. And it arises from the doubt as to whether Style is to be regarded as a science at all, and as such in a position to be illuminated—with the privilege of reciprocal illumination—by any science whatsoever.

To the ordinary way of thinking, nothing more is required for a science than that the facts which it provides shall be susceptible of a logical classification. But there is also the negative condition of qualification—viz., that the science shall have its own lawful complement of facts. In the present case, Style is regarded somehow as a galaxy of miscellaneous truths, chiefly of truths practical and applied. If as a science it is to be considered, it seems to withdraw itself into such a science as Logic; so that ultimately it *is* no science, wanting an independent basis. But in this there is the natural oversight, that certain facts, however eagerly they may submit to the rules of a system like Logic, as a primary source of administration, may yet be susceptible of a *secondary* treatment and valuation. Practical Style may be; yet, examined philosophically, it will be found to include a nucleus of theoretic principles, to which, more immediately than to those of Logic, its facts may be referred. This skeleton of principle it is, this nucleus—whether it be one according to which certain facts common to all mental science are treated, or a derivative order of facts, or facts entirely original—which constitutes the Science of Style.

For the coherent exposition of its own facts a theory requires a tolerably large compass. But, within that compass, and in the particular illustration of its facts, a science will infallibly ratify its claim to having special data. The more



unique its position theoretically, the more striking its interpretation of these data. But the burden of doing explicitly and by anticipation what the science itself does implicitly, descends upon the Introduction, which has to show with precision what the principle is, according to which phenomena that apparently have been pre-engrossed by sciences more lucky or more precocious, may be treated, virtually, or in fact, as new. The negative condition being thus satisfied, Style vaults airily into the cycle of the sciences. But this ennobling of Style, in claiming a scientific lineage for a certain order of facts, involves the enlarging of the conception of science itself. Hence, in the second place, it devolves upon an Introduction to Style to reflect a principle upon science generally, as discovering a new variety of adaptation, and possibly of treatment. Bringing thus for the principle of science fresh facts, it brings for the facts of science a fresh principle. And so its two aims or results coincide. For the principle, under which the facts have been discovered to be amenable to scientific analysis, is precisely the principle which must underlie and coincide with the supplementary extension given to the notion of science. An incidental result is that the scientific meaning of certain acknowledged facts is established, where it was believed to be impossible; and a profounder and more emphatic, because more precise and consistent, recognition given of them in regions, where, if in part formally recognised, they were virtually, and in their distinctive principle, denied.

An operative, and, practically, a new distinction is introduced into science, when a division is made of the Subjective or Mental sciences into those which are concerned with Sensi-

bility, and those which are not. The facts, and through the facts, the laws of Style, and, in a greater degree, of Music, are not to be obtained at first hand by every one. They are to be gathered only through a special medium, superadded to the intellectual medium which is essential to all scientific exposition. To Logic, however, as a branch of mental science, the term Subjective does not apply in the philosophic sense. Its phenomena are severely objective, in so far as they may be observed by everybody, and yield principles which each one may test for himself. In the same way, the facts of Style, though subject to a greater fluctuation and diversity than those of Logic, are also objective, in the sense that ultimately they rest on a common sensibility, not necessarily morbid in cases where it is high, nor coarse where it is low. The variations of individual, *i.e.* truly subjective, sensibility are infinite. But it is on that account precisely that a wary science will refuse to compromise itself by an explanation of facts, that, *ex hypothesi*, are too numerous to be explained. Such an explanation would be impossible. It would also be suicidal. For it is only with these variations as recurrent, and having essential points of agreement, and a catholic significance, that the science is concerned. All beyond that is isolated, in many cases contradictory. And with individual bias or eccentricity, even in a god, science has nothing to do. The limit, therefore, at which Style ceases to be objective, is where it ceases to transcend individual peculiarity, and where effects become local and capricious. At the same time, and while ultimately there is no difference in this respect, a distinction may be made between Style and Logic on the ground of the greater evasiveness of its phenomena, because adding an element distinct from that

which makes the logical phenomena themselves evasive as distinct from those of Physical Science. The sciences fall most conveniently, therefore, into this order, the Physical, the Philosophical, and the Æsthetic or Critical. The distinction is valid for ordinary purposes, and must be insisted on for Style, especially in its relation to Logic, as occupying a station intermediate between it and the Natural Sciences—which relation is now illustrated in detail.

1. Style, together with Logic, may in part be distinguished from the Physical Sciences by the less palpable nature of its phenomena, and, contingently, by the greater precariousness of its method. But it is also to be distinguished by the fact of being more stationary as a system. Not that mental science, as, for example, in the form of Psychology, where discoveries are constantly being registered, is not progressive as a whole, but, in certain fields belonging more exclusively to speculative analysis, it *is* improgressive. And a test (which must be verified historically) may thus be applied to discriminate the pure sections in philosophy from the mixed or derivative. Accordingly, those which at the very first are capable of a complete integration, go into the category of the cardinal sciences, and those which are not, into that of the derivative sciences. The facts of Style, in contradistinction to those of Physical Science, may be collected in virtual completeness by one single observer. The theory is not one that depends on a complementary observation extending over an indefinite period of time. And so Style ranges itself, along with Logic and Grammar, under the category of Pure Mental Science.

Notwithstanding this, there is no privileged road to discovery in Logic or in Style, other than that of severe

observation and reflection, by which science universally travels, so haughtily as regards its warrant, so patiently as regards its results. It is precisely as evanescent, and requiring a keener observation, that their phenomena are discarded for others of a more palpable character. Certainly there is no monopoly created for Style by the mere opportunities which the individual theorist has for inquiry. Scientific success does not go according to the *mechanical* facilities which one man has, as compared with another, for collecting facts—is not given gratuitously—but goes according to individual capacity for the collation of facts, for observation and generalization. Else the savage has more opportunity of naturalistic acquirement, because more of naturalistic research, than the man of culture. Hence it is that mere perception of effects is not operative in all men alike, nor mediately to the same results. In Style, for example, the power to write idiomatically and with precision does not confer the power of scientific analysis; the two in all likelihood exist inversely as each other. But the literary power may evidently become a desirable co-efficient in an analysis that is dedicated exclusively to literary phenomena. And, in an analysis which aims at a precision as perfect as that attainable under any other science, it is too evidently an indispensable co-efficient. Hence the main distinction between Logic and Style, in a sensibility which supplies the facts that are to be logically explained; having, in so far, no value for Logic, but, on the other hand, being invaluable for *Æsthetic Criticism*.

2. Sensibility is, accordingly, the element which distinguishes a logical from an æsthetic science. Not, however, in the sense of being antagonistic to logical analysis. On the

contrary, it is of no value in science without that. For literary science, therefore, considered in its unity, each is reciprocally indispensable to the other. The same truth is expressed in saying that Sensibility is the negative condition for all systematic inquiry in the region of literary effect; as may be illustrated historically in relation to Style itself.

Strictly speaking, Style has no history. For a history demands a unity of subject, with a series of developments more or less marked and continuous. The only interest that Style can have is, in this view, a negative and exoteric interest. Considered under this limitation, therefore, Style resolves itself historically into two momenta, or crises, of which the appearance of Aristotle forms the first. It might seem curious, that, of two subjects lying parallel to each other, that one should be chosen for the richer and more explicit treatment, whose phenomena are, on the whole, the more recondite. A man is naturally more struck by the use of a barbarism in speech—*i.e.* it is more of an event for him, whether he mentions it to his wife or not—than by the fact that his neighbour is reasoning in a circle. But the grossest phenomena are not always the most suggestive. Especially are they not likely to be suggestive when they appeal to a capacity, which, not being exceptionally sensitive itself, is flanked by a capacity that *is* exceptional for perceiving and pursuing some other order of phenomena.

This is sufficient to explain, for the moment, why Logic rather than Literary Science should have met with a conclusive treatment at the hands of Aristotle. An attempt, it is true, was formally made by him to systematize the other class of facts. But it is clear that he did not apprehend the subject in its philosophic relations; else he would have seen that it is

precisely analogous to Logic—persistently and selfishly so—complementary to it, and erecting itself beside it to whatever extent, and in what direction soever it may be impelled. Hence the subordinate place assigned to Style in his complete system, as a suckling of Oratorical Science; and in such a way as to thwart and vitiate its literary significance. Hence also this very striking circumstance, connected with the fact of its depreciation. Considered independently, Style allows of an abstract treatment, in at least as great a degree as Logic. Sensibility apart, the pure intellect may construct a speculative science of the subject for itself. How much more then with the light reflected upon it so unequivocally by the revelations of Logic. But, as in passing from one subject to another, the two may be affected favourably by their intense juxtaposition, so sometimes they may be mischievously affected, and clash with each other. Having the first, a man will the more readily have the second; or else, having the first, he will *not* have the second. Either his conception of the one, by implying the conception of the possible whole, will suggest and illuminate the other; or else, by palming itself off as the actual whole, will obscure the conception of the other. This is, to a certain extent, the explanation of the unimpartial treatment, so to speak, accorded to the Rhetoric, as compared with the Organon, where, upon a superficial view, brilliance of analysis might seem to have been most required. Since if—and *if*, then precisely *because*, his sensibility was not exceptional, Aristotle was bound to supplement it by that which he had in abundance. The case, however, was otherwise; theorizing, in the absence of sensibility, being simply impossible. But in part also the want of susceptibility in this direction, which determined him to—

wards Logic, as a science promising a more unique and opulent result, would determine him at the same time away from Style, as a field that did not present phenomena congenial for exposition, and that did not, therefore, for *his* subtlety furnish an adequate stage of illustration.

A proof of this appears in connection with the effects which more particularly he *did* note. It was open to him to have overlooked the whole body of literary appearances. What he did overlook was that section which is least prominent and most characteristic. Limiting his view thus, he concentrates attention upon those facts which it belongs to the average sensibility to desery for itself, and which require a very moderate effort to systematize. In this latter respect it is that the Rhetoric of Aristotle compares so meagrely with his Organon, and precisely because lacking, in its separate sphere, a corresponding depth of perception. The section of effects which the Rhetoric represents is concerned with that identical sphere of perception which is the most common, and, similarly, the Rhetoric itself is concerned with that systematizing of effects, whose activity unfolds itself most easily. Another sphere, which has been already indicated, is that of the abstract science, in which the principles of Logic and Style unfold concurrently. But the whole cycle of Stylic science is not complete, until a third section of still more complex effects is reduced to system. This order of effects is more subtle and intricate than any with which the analyst occupies himself in Logic. The dissertationist on Style in its more abstract relations does not necessarily possess a command over this ultimate section; though he cannot investigate it thoroughly without that command. But, having the qualifying sensibility, he will inevitably, in his analysis of it, recur

to the abstract science as his ultimate ground of reference. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that, for want of this qualification, Aristotle should not have busied himself seriously with either the one section or the other—the accident of the *Organon* apart, as a possible cause predisposing to, or away from, an equally rigorous and determinative treatment of Style. Within a certain compass his own style is unexceptionably good. But of any extrinsic brilliance in his writing, or even of the art of manœuvring to advantage within the limits prescribed by philosophic exigencies, there is no trace. And, which is more important, to compensate for this want, there is no sign of any æsthetic perception of effects beyond those reproduced in his own practice. His critical susceptibility was not pitched (as it might quite well have been) upon a higher key than that to which he himself daily conformed. So that, as far as any acquaintance with the higher effects was concerned, it must have been drawn from the practice of his own countrymen. The Greeks, as a rule, compare favourably with other nations in this respect. As general practitioners in the art, they are always to be commended for imitation; and they excel in certain of the more essential qualities that go towards realizing a noble standard of composition. But that conspicuous excellence is wanting that might have suggested to a contemporary a very high, and, in connection with striking deformities of expression (which in this case were also wanting), a very practical and thoroughgoing, literary ideal.

So far, indeed, as Greece is concerned, critical science in Aristotle is not so far behind models of real excellence, as it is in the rear of such transcendent models as have appeared in England. The effect of such models, in stimulating



criticism and enlarging its area, will be determined by the way in which these models unite to form a catholic ideal. Even this chance, however, of accomplishing such an end will be defeated, should the critic happen to be out of harmony with the scope of his materials, and busy himself with the exposition of certain orders of excellence to the exclusion of the rest. The greater, therefore, is the necessity for a catholic sympathy that shall confirm, and not subvert, the data, which, in having brought near to them the requisite qualifications for their practical study are, *pro tanto*, brought nearer to an appreciable result—a sympathy that shall not falsify its claims in the moment of substantiating them. One only case there is, in which this sympathy with pre-existing effects may be dispensed with, that, viz., in which it is superseded by the accident of a critic who exhibits the principle of these effects in himself. De Quincey, with unparalleled compass of sensibility, and with great analytic acuteness, might naturally have been expected to furnish a result in which the two might effectively be combined. To the materials that Aristotle lacked, he added the power that was to ratify them; and, to such an extent, as not merely to supersede the illustrations of older writers, if by chance they had been orbicular enough in their sweep for an analysis to found upon, but to anticipate the latest phases of creative sensibility, if by chance these should not have been already developed.

The appearance of De Quincey, in fact, constitutes the second momentum in the history of Style. That this momentum is again a crisis, not an epoch, is due to the fact that the possible advantages from a susceptibility so complex were neutralized, for purposes of an exposition that should, in any

sense, be final, by his defect of energy for pure speculation.<sup>1</sup> So much, at least, of negative constructiveness the world was justified in expecting, as would have shattered the confusions besieging the subject. These to have exposed would seem to have been suited to his peculiar ability and his peculiar *mettle*. And that with a result the more favourable, as one might have presumed, for the diffusion of critical knowledge, from his rare power of philosophical exposition. No difficulty that he was not qualified to divest of any preternatural appearance of complexity or abstruseness: no problem whose spurious simplicity he was not able to detect, and in its mischievousness to counteract, by exposing it in that light which was best calculated to reveal the lurking perplexity. But never was there a mind more fitted to mediate between philosophy and the popular good-will, that was more irretrievably cut off from such communication, by a want of sympathy with philosophy itself, precisely in those latitudes where a facile exposition was most needed for the populace, because in the general case most difficult to obtain from expositors, and most demanded, because in his individual case most easy to give.

To this want so clamorous, to this crisis so bewitching, De Quincey brought nothing but a gleam or two of critical insight, and with a result that is naturally more tantalizing than the shortcoming of Aristotle. Against any such shortcoming, as detrimental to his general reputation, Aristotle had virtually pleaded in the blazing originality of the *Organon*.

<sup>1</sup> This refers not to anything De Quincey failed to do, but evidently to some *positive* misunderstanding of certain philosophic problems. The reader of De Quincey surmises that the special victim of this obliquity—but with no desire on the part of the critic save to state the matter truthfully, and disarmed as to the special misinterpretation by its very *naïveté*—was Kant.

And, which made the matter still more interesting, his power in the *Organon* shone not merely by itself, but by an *involution* of itself, which upon the arena of Style might have been illustrated, in a way more comprehensive and theatrical, by De Quincey. What Aristotle effected had this peculiar property, that it was effected by a movement of circularity. It was the judgment itself occupied upon the judgment; and such a judgment, occupied on such materials, as to produce a result in which all men should virtually agree. Deny the perfection of the judgment, and, *à priori*, you impugn the truth of the system. Deny the truth of the system, and, *à posteriori*, you infer the weakness of the judgment. Accepting absolutely the thesis of Aristotle, you admit it as a criterion of the process by which you pronounce upon the logic of the thesis itself. Refusing to accept the thesis as true, you imply, and are bound to produce, another explanation of that very process by which you have discovered that the process is other than that laid down by the theorist. By a parallel chance in Style, a writer like De Quincey is practically the exponent of the very principles which in theory he enunciates and commends. Now, in such a case, it is the Sensibility which forms the machinery of the involution. Lustre will unquestionably be given to logical science by beauty of Style. But this element is adventitious. It is not implicit in the conception of Logic, as perceptive sympathy *is* implicit in the conception of sensibility on such a scale as De Quincey's. But Style, besides this element of sensibility, as inseparably a condition for scientific exposition, demands also the more palpable element of speculative insight. Where a science of Logic demands one element, therefore, an adequate science of Style demands two. And while Logic is thus its own expo-

nent, Style may be more illustriously so, because having an involution of scientific insight the same in degree as that of Logic, to which Logic, on its part, has nothing to answer in the way of sensibility. This sensibility was neutralized in De Quincey for its scientific application (despite his fastidious thinking), by the want of that element, which, in the converse case of Aristotle, was neutralized by the want of the antithetic sensibility.

The antithesis, which is thus illustrated, is equally true in relation to its two elements, whether existing in insulation from each other, or aiding one another in a scientific rationale of the whole field under review. What is easy to perceive is *pro tanto* easy to systematize. And what tends, by its very nature, to incarnate itself under universal distinctions is *pro tanto* easy to perceive. And here, as suggesting itself from the special contrast already indicated in the historical relations of both sciences, a general contrast may be drawn between Style and Logic. Logic, in the *Organon* of Aristotle, was then first recognised as a fact, when it was first recognised as a science. Its phenomena were first matter of general observation, when their connecting principles were first formally arranged in their relation to its dominant principle. Style, on the other hand, has been long recognised as a fact—certain even of its distinctions are current and popular—but not earnestly and conscientiously as a science. And so long as its main distinctions remain neither explicated, nor shown in their propulsion, nor in their analogical relations, nor in their speculative significance, there is nothing to contribute to the science, much less the history, of the subject, which is also the history of the science.

The final lesson, therefore, of the antithesis between the

two elements is that of their being mutually necessary to each other, and, as it were, in a certain order; and precisely, for the science, in *this* order, that it must presuppose and follow the sensibility. Nothing, indeed, can be more self-evident than that a man should be unable to give the rationale of certain facts, when he does not perceive them, or does not perceive them to the extent that they ought to be perceived. How, for instance, should he expect to be listened to as a critic, who pronounces a certain image to be sublime, or the cadence of a certain passage to be harmonious, having no æsthetic perception whatsoever? For in Style generally there may be discriminated three classes of effects: (1) those which the investigator sees in common with all, (2) those which he sees in common with a few, and (3) those which possibly he sees to the exclusion of everybody else. In view of this, and relying upon the common ground of agreement which he has with all, it is his business gradually to extend the frontier of perception as far as he can—initiate the first class of readers into the secrets of the second, and the second into those of the third, along with such of the first class as have surmounted the difficulties of the second sphere. Unless, indeed, he has either something special to communicate, or some more concise or more fascinating method of communicating to the many what as yet is only enjoyed by the few, or of impressing upon all, from his station of authority, what is only held vaguely, there is no justification for the obtrusion of his views. But only as founding ultimately on a catholic sensibility, is he warranted in putting the matter in such a way as to secure interest for it, and attention for himself. Nor is this a method which belongs to these facts as an insulated class of facts. It is the method of the Fine Arts generally. In

Painting, for instance, besides the abstract science, which treats of the general divisions of form and colour, &c., there is the concrete science, which tells, according to the criterion of the sensibility, why certain individual effects are beautiful, or the opposite. Among such effects, it is the province of the most ordinary sensibility to recognise the agreeable impression produced by clusters of scarlet berries upon a background of green. But a subtler question arises, why it is that such berries are more effective as seen on a tree with feathery branches, than they would be on a yew tree, for example. The reason generally is this:—The combination cannot fail to benefit in effect by the greater disclosure of the wood of the branches, as in the former case, and of the berries themselves; leaves, berries, and branches forming, first, a perceptible variety in material, next, one of colour, and, finally, a graduated series in regard to stability (as under the possible movements of the wind), which would not be available to the same extent in the case of the obscuring branches of the yew. But, specially, the difference is due (1) to the contrast of the perky or pensile character of the leaves, in the former case, with the solid and pendulous character of the berries—contrast, the sense of which would be stifled in regard to the clotted or matted branches of the yew. And (2) in the case of the tree which allows for so much variegation in the superficial outline, and, as it were, so much general transparency, there is a chance of both leaves and berries being relieved against a *common* background.

3. In thus discovering itself to be a Fine Art, Style is not to be distinguished from Logic, as if it were something superior, merely because it has something superadded. Any superiority which it can show must rest upon its value,

considered teleologically, Here, nevertheless, a practical superiority is claimed for Style. Not that its aim is absolutely higher than the aim of any art which proposes to redress the inequalities, and correct the infirmities, of the human judgment. No intellectual aim can possibly be so high. Besides, the improvement of the catholic judgment, in so far as it is corrigible by rules, involves an education generally for other purposes, by which Art itself must ultimately profit. But the lower art as to aim may yet happen to approximate more closely to its aim than the higher. The defence, therefore, which might apply to Logic, as a science that must be examined formally, before it can yield its full quota of practical results (notwithstanding that these results are concerned with rules whose application must already be presupposed), is irrelevant to Style. For while in Logic the alternatives are few, under which effects are good or bad, the particularization of which Style is capable admits of an indefinite number of examples of good or of vicious expression being given, having all the vividness of a circumstantial treatment and all the force of a general principle. It thus provides for a graduated improvement, to which Logic (as universally understood) makes no pretension. The reason of this is plain. In so far as Style is complex, it allows of a specific treatment in a degree unattainable by Logic;—for the same reason a history of Universal Literature is evidently a much subtler problem than a history of Philosophy. But by Logic in what guise is this unattainable? It is as being *formally* too simple. A certain fallacy may be seen, and not only seen, but seen to come under a special principle and category of fallacy; and yet the man who sees it may be unable to bring it home to the man who uses it, and who per-

sists that his argument does *not* come within that category. Did Logic seek to go beyond this, its boundaries would be inordinately enlarged, and it would have to descend to impossible details. The objection to it in such a case would be, not that it is too simple, but that it is too complex. And if the logician will descend into the region of material truth, he must not be disgusted to find that his researches are circumscribed and arbitrary. It is significant, therefore, in this connection, when such a man chooses his illustrations from science: when he analyses foregone conclusions, and builds up formal results from acknowledged data. In this way he attains certainty: but it is at the expense of catholicity, and Logic becomes a science of particular, not of universal application. For the sphere, within which the universal science is practical, is limited. Nor can it become more practical without becoming special, and ceasing to be a pure science. Whereas the advantage for science otherwise, and for the arts generally, is precisely that they are special—that they are complex, where complexity, in relation to circumstantial conclusions, is of use, and *not* complex, where complexity would disconcert or confound. And the advantage for Style is simply that the manifold details which aid its practical exposition may be gathered into unity in a system whose formal limits coincide with its material.

To the application of a science which, on such a general view, promises a wider adaptation than even Logic, there can be no direct objection, save under that class of objections which founds on its special pretensions as an art. The sphere which is most sanguinely claimed for it is, of course, the very sphere from which it will be warned off most boisterously.



But the fact remains, that it will always be treated implicitly as a science. And not the circumstance of its being practical will supersede all scientific analysis, but analysis will be summoned to direct the bent of the practical issues; especially if a loose and flippant criticism is likely to prevail, and train it into a low and sterile order of performance. Under ordinary conditions, a subject is cultured theoretically because it is obscure: not comporting with the ease and extent of its practice, or not tallying with the results which might be expected from what already is presumed of its elastic powers, or from the forging ahead of kindred subjects. And if it remains obscure, it does so in spite of the counterworking culture. But where the analysis applied to it is superficial, not merely is the first of these cases reversed, but both are reversed. And the subject is not only cultured in spite of remaining obscure, but is obscured by the culture itself. The attitude of such a culture might perhaps be expected to be hostile to a more decisive analysis, the tendency of which is inevitably to supersede the other where it is narrow, and to amend it where it is false. And all the more, that in such a case it tends to dissipate the *feeling* of satisfaction with partial principles accepted as universal, and subordinate principles assumed as ultimate and fundamental. But the nature and beauty of the theme are sufficiently a corrective of any such illiberal reception. It is always an advantage, when it is possible to shift the reproach which may attach to the manner in which a subject is treated upon the subject itself as necessitating that treatment. Especially is it an advantage, when the attractiveness of the subject will neutralise the odium which might otherwise settle upon the particular mode of the examination. Most of all, however, when the general

opinion is deeply prepossessed in favour of the question, as being of an interest so directly practical as that which is inseparable from Style even under the most abstruse mode of investigation.

It is well for literary criticism, nevertheless, that it should be fortified in this way against vulgar misconceptions, whether of a popular cast or of a quasi-philosophic. Its adaptability for scientific purposes is indeed, to a certain extent, a reason why it should not be cultivated, in spite of the concurrent interest attaching to it; and why a collision arises between the speculative bias and the practical. For here is a matter coming under the eye of the ordinary reader every day, and in so far qualifying him for a speculative interest in it in spite of himself. Yet, on the other hand, his very familiarity with it may, in spite of itself, and to the same extent, be a disqualification. The general question, however, with regard to the treatment of such a subject in such a fashion, becomes really a question of the *right* to treat it scientifically. Now apart from the fact that a disgrace attaches to a science undeveloped, similar to that which attaches to an individual or a nation that is undeveloped, it is to be observed, that it is not the absolute minimum of capacity which is addressed, but only those are addressed, for whom possibly the theme has attraction and intelligibility. A scientific treatment, besides, is its own justification. It is nothing more than an accurate examination of a mass of facts, directly or indirectly in subordination to the highest known principles. It can only be shown to fail, therefore, by a reference to its own criterion, and by being detected to be *not* scientific, *i.e.* not accurate, however pretentious in phrase;—and in so far as it is inaccurate and pretentious, it is also culpable,

because discrediting sound terms and principles. As to the reader, he need not feel insulted by the assumption of his ignorance on the part of the critic. That ignorance on this particular subject is accidental. And the critic reciprocally pledges himself to give his most polite attention, at that date when the reader shall find it convenient to enlighten *him* on any subject he may chance to be ignorant of. Being a poor man, he will naturally wish to learn how to make money. Being an honest man, he will wish to have an insight into the way of making it fraudulently; the more especially that, being also inoffensive, he is disposed to find out how he can render himself obnoxious to society and to the law. And since he is farther a person of refinement, he will be seized with a desire to know upon what minimum scale of luxury a prison discipline allows a man to live. There is, in fact, no limit to the amount of theoretical information which may be supplied in this way; unless, of course, the reader demurs to such insinuations, as impertinently seeking to exalt his erudition at the expense of his honesty. Be it so: let the reader be as ignorant of these subjects as he is of the laws of literary criticism; and let it be equally an insult to his honesty to suppose him acquainted with these laws when he is not. But because the critic does not insult the reader in assuming his ignorance, he is not bound to insult him by assuming his incapacity. He dare not do so, indeed, when presenting to him for his profit, in a systematic form, what in any other would be meaningless. No pillar of fine proportions exists but what may be broken and pulverised; with a difficulty, moreover, in pulverising, corresponding to the difficulty of chiselling into shape. But the lessons which might be taught regarding the relations of angle and mass, etc. are not to be learned *after* the process of

disintegration—else the sea-beach is the befitting spot for instruction.

The superficial treatment which is popularly decreed to Style, is sometimes decreed to it also by pure science. Thus it is that, under certain aspects, philosophic thought generally is repudiated by science, as attaining by mere brain-carpentry to a visionary stateliness of proportion, while it is buffeted by the populace for a proficiency that is gained only at the expense of its being communicable. All mental activity, indeed, is justly at a discount with exact thinkers, where it does not yield accurate results. It is only by irreflective persons that such rare inaccuracy is tolerated as that of an analyst, who, having enumerated all the facts (perhaps four or five) which come under a certain classification, adds, "these and a score of others," when his enumeration is simply complete. If undetermined in cases where the channel is so clearly marked out for him, is he likely to be less so, when his survey is partial or confused from the very outset? Philosophy itself is the first to sneer at such bungling. At the same time the case may appear to it only normal in the circumstances, and inevitable under a critical *régime*. And that it does not sneer in this particular instance, may be owing to the fact that it has already recorded its formal disapprobation of the entire critical method. While from analogy, therefore, philosophy might be expected to support criticism, we must not be discomfited if it should withdraw its support, just at that point where the interests of the two cease to be common, and repudiate connection with it in its peculiar extensions, if not *in toto*, as cherishing principles incompatible with its own. The more the two orders of effects are studied, however, the more will it be seen that they resemble each other; and the

more will the thinking appear rustic and provincial, which sets down the facts of literary science as trivial, and its principle as nugatory. And since the relations under which such a charge may be substantiated are these two—(1) of the possibility of certain effects being *analysed*, and (2) of the possibility of their being *communicated*, it is in these relations that the validity of a scientific criticism is most happily vindicated.

1. The case suggests itself as to the decomposition of rhetorical effects being possible. Sensibility being granted, the question arises as to whether it is transformable into logical propositions. A question so simple might be met by a reference to Art, as a branch of culture whose practical rules found on effects which are first experienced in the sensitivity and then brought into system—were it not that the reference might be considered insufficient. For it might be argued that the results in that section, in so far as they are parallel, are due to quackery or self-delusion, or at least are equally unintelligible as to principle. Now the distinctive medium is the same for both—a self-consciousness that yields faithfully, on the one hand, to the impressions of sensibility, and readily, on the other, to the pressure of the analytic intellect, when it insists upon these impressions being reproduced. The part of the intellect, therefore, is to suggest the alternative possibilities that might separately, or in combination, have effected certain results. On equating and confronting these with the reproduced sensibility, it will be declared which it is that has been the sole or chief agent. Sometimes this takes place by a positive and immediate decision. Sometimes, under a less lively self-consciousness, it is brought about by the rejection one after another of all the alternatives except those which

are to be received as having instigated the result. The alternative (if it is a single one) may happen to be indifferent, and may refuse to give any positive token of its having operated. Yet if the others shew positive signs of dissent, there is sufficient reason, in the circumstances, for accepting it as the influential agent.

Such is the rationale of these effects, which (other things equal) will shew themselves in exact proportion to the subtlety of the investigator. And where no such results are found, we simply infer, not the inviolability of the effects, but the ineptitude of the analysis. That the presumed sensibility in any individual case is great, in proportion to the meagreness of its antecedents (as published through the scientific examination), argues not that the sensibility is more, but that the critical faculty is less. The very vagueness of exaltation with which the critic colours his exposition, so far from testifying to the exceptional degree of his susceptibility, may be simply the exponent of his obscurity regarding it. What is possibly an over-estimate of the delicacy of his individual impressions, can never become the measure of the real subtlety of the impressions. For an excess of sensibility in regard to certain effects, being purely subjective, is irrelevant to any purpose of philosophic analysis. It is with an objective sensibility, allowing for the collation of one man's impressions with those of another, that the science is concerned. Of two analysts, therefore, his conclusions will have most weight, who has interpreted his impressions most thoroughly. A critic may be very modest, as well as very honest, in declaring that the facts with which he occupies himself are too subtle for explanation. But he is certainly a nincompoop, if he does not see that that invalidates not in the least the chances of their being ex-

plained, except in so far as it is a fatal disqualification of himself, in point of that which is his sole recommendation in the matter. His assurances do not kill anybody but himself; they do not frighten, much less wound people of ordinary respectability. The sole exponent of sensibility is analytic power. That analysis meets the sensibility, therefore, is no lowering of *it*, but is an expansion of the parallel energy of the analytic intellect. Refuse the mind power to analyse, and you degrade it without exalting the sensibility. Admit this power, and you exalt it without degrading the sensibility. But the secret is that the indefiniteness of the sensibility (if it is indefinite) can only be shewn by at least *assuming* that it may be overtaken by analysis. It is either to be analysed, or not. If it is, this is all that is demanded. If not, then instead of the sensibility remaining simply at a point beyond the limits at which it may be pounced upon by science, it will be seen to mount indefinitely higher; since the more the analysis expands, the subtler will be the sensibility if after all it evades it, and the greater the indefiniteness of that of which confessedly the analysis has not been able to bring back any account.

The first alternative is the one to be concurred in for less speculative reasons. Not merely on a sentimental view, such as that of slighting the subtlety of the human mind in one sphere for the sake of magnifying it in another—which is fallacious as regards the first and futile as regards the second; nor because it is superficial to suppose that a study of the mind, in any even of its most barren sections, can be dismissed superficially; nor because the division of effects into those which may be treated analytically, and those which may not, is arbitrary, making a distinction of kind, where there is only

warrant for one of degree; but because the theory as to fact is so erroneous; and to adopt the other correspondingly a necessity, from the impulse not so much to embrace what is psychologically true, as to reject what is psychologically absurd. The sensibility, we will assume, has yielded to certain effects, and in yielding has conformed to them. But it could not thus have conformed to them, except by conforming to their principles, under an intellectual guidance more or less subconscious; which principles of guidance are exactly those which it is the cue and the duty of the analysis to define. Nor again, if the principles which underlie the sensibility are not evasive, are they at least so anomalous as to interfere with scientific completeness. They only appear anomalous to a critic who either overlooks significant data, or else, having already confused the data by a false classification, naturally ascribes to them, by way of heterogeneousness, what is due to the inconsistency of the method. Ultimate difficulty of this order in science there need be none: so much barricade, so much material for scaffolding. Finally, therefore, the investigator need not be confounded by any multiplicity of details, in rising to the principles that will enable him to set and view them in their proper relations. The same complexity is common to all other sciences. It does not operate in the way of baffling artistic insight; but is the indispensable condition of artistic culture, and of a culture that is extended in proportion as the details are numerous.

2. The distinctions which the theorist on Style has to deal with present themselves first in the way of art, of art passive and intuitive or perceptive; they are next received by science, and their principles explicated; and finally they issue again in the form of art, but this time of art active and militant,



ministerial and didactic. In this process science has a double function, reposing on an organic connection, first, between the actual sensibility of the investigator and his analytic capacity, and secondly, between the analytic receptivity of those he addresses and their potential susceptibility. It is with Style in this latter relation that the second problem is concerned, viz., as to the possibility of culture.

The instructor has to see and point out not merely abstract varieties of expression, but these varieties under a limited number of relations as ultimately good or bad. Hence the farther classification of effects into those (1) which he along with his readers sees as bad or good, (2) those which he sees, but which they do not see, and (3) those which they see, but which he does not see, *i.e.* those which he sees them to see through a medium of fallacy or distortion. From the collision which may ensue between his sensibility and theirs, the dilemma arises:—on the one hand, it is needless to put in a scientific form what is already recognised as practical truth, and, on the other, what is not recognised, since that confessedly is transcendental or contradictory. For either the result which he seeks to establish is within the reach of the pupil, in which case it is useless to harp upon it; or else it is out of his reach, and there is no common ground to go upon. Now, on a coarse estimate, it is quite possible to speak of certain effects as being perceptible to the learners in common with their instructor. But identically the same effects will not be perceptible to each, or to all in the same degree. A will represent an order of effects appreciable only in part to some who appreciate B, a different order of effects, or a higher order like C; and so by permutation all through—points seen by some in common with the expositor

being missed by those who are more at home in other sections. Some effects, therefore, there will always be repugnant to some among the learners, prior to the philosophic explanation. But besides this distinction, and apart altogether from the manifest value of holding in a precise form (with increased security for its practical application and for acquiring facts that move to the music of similar principles) what otherwise must be held indefinitely, it is to be observed, that the novice demands for his satisfaction a systematic rationale that indirectly shall confirm or correct the impressions which previously he may have formed. A rationale of such a kind has this value for the tyro, not merely that he may know what is right or wrong in the cases that are specified, but that he may decide to what extent his standard has been just. And for this purpose he requires in a formal treatise—which is supposed to transcend at least the hints of conversation and of desultory criticism—something more than the mere expression of a casual coincidence between himself and the critic. The needs of the case are not met by a simple statement, that such and such a passage is beautiful, etc. The vagueness of the assertion may really be in league with the reader's falser taste to deceive him, even in cases where, if specific reasons had been alleged, they might have been repudiated, and the plea resting upon them dispelled. A more definite statement would be made in describing the passage as luminous, etc. But the objection to the use of metaphorical equivalents is not thereby removed. Practically, indeed, such a term may be definite enough for the reader. But this can only be through the distinct logical meaning which he has already attached to it.

A certain number of technical equivalents is thus presupposed as known to the student, even in cases where his views

harmonise with those of the preceptor. Where the latter, however, is concerned to put the matter so as to provide for a *rapprochement*, in the event of being misunderstood, he will do his best fully to explicate his meaning. In cases, therefore, where his sensibility is contradictory or transcendental, it clamours most of all for a scientific exposition. A metaphorical expression may be not only vague, but sometimes unintelligible or paradoxical. To say, for example, that the following definition is brilliant in a literary sense, is only puzzling to the mind whose preconceptions of brilliance are those of vivid metaphor, or racy personality, etc. "I use the term negative condition as equivalent to the term *conditio sine qua non* and both in the scholastic sense. The negative condition of  $x$  is that which being absent  $x$  cannot exist; but which being present  $x$  will not *therefore* exist, unless a positive ground of  $x$  be co-present. Briefly—if not, not: if yes, not therefore yes." When it is explained, however, that the brilliance, on which stress is laid in this instance, is that of condensation (by means of the most exquisite simplicity), the synthesis of the two ideas becomes apparent. And a new flexion is given to the idea of brilliance generally, under which rapidity of execution is subsumed as an element of rhetorical prowess, and therefore to be admired, and of effect, and to be imitated. The figurative expressions, regarding which a sufficient definiteness of opinion prevails, are too general for the specification which criticism needs, as well as by far too limited in their number. The public, for the most part, conceits itself upon the recognition of the principle that reasons must be assigned for maintaining any proposition. It does not take much pains, at all events, to remember that it is specific, not general reasons, which constitute a valid

ground of *authority*; and especially that this is the only ground of authority. It is too obstinately or too languidly content with phrases, which seem comprehensive, but simply are vague, neither ultimate, on the one hand, nor specific, on the other. Most of all, in reference to literary art, it needs peremptorily to be reminded that every statement which is not countersigned by distinct reasons is to be received only as a personal assurance. Individual opinion is virtually private opinion, though it were published in folio, and had run through fifty editions. There are occasions, doubtless, on which an unsupported assertion is quite allowable. But these stand in a class by themselves. And the reader need not hesitate to reject an assurance in cases where the point at issue is strictly critical—*i.e.* admitting a *balance* of reasons; and calling for a determination to one side or the other—especially in the absence of any indirect support given to it by a general scientific cast of treatment. In the casual absence of such reasons he will respect the critic for his general judiciousness (as shown in the accuracy of his explanations, and the tact with which he selects and varies his examples, etc.), and give him the reflex benefit and prestige of any success which he has fairly won. For the critic, however, to take advantage of his acknowledged status, for bullying the reader into compliance regarding one solitary fact of which he cannot furnish the rationale, is the vulgar trick of the electioneering landlord, in a political contest, who uses his influence to bias the votes of his tenants.

The sensibility of the communicator is, then, we will assume, virtually transcendental: since that is a condition for its being of use to others. The remaining condition, which is that it shall be intelligibly communicated, is fulfilled in its

scientific exposition, in so far as that is a guarantee of its *unequivocal* expression. Anything more, indeed, would be finical or officious; in the spirit of the martinet or the propagandist. We have thus in sensibility, acting concurrently with analysis, guaranteed the abnegation of all benefit to be derived from the monopoly of any faculty of æsthetic perception, except in so far as its results are incommunicable. And to that extent there is a warrant for individual sincerity; since it is clearly not for the interest of any one to exhibit nakedly for imitation effects, which constitute indefeasibly the ground of a certain superiority on his part. Not that such a practice is necessarily disinterested. What the analyst aims at may be simply the advertising of his own peculiar mode of expression. But it is clear that strict analysis, so far from lending itself to promote that abuse, is hostile to it. Since the moment the critic supplies the rationale of certain effects (to whomsoever they may belong), he places the reader in a position to appraise them. It is precisely in the absence of a scientific valuation that impertinent collusion is possible on the part of the writer with his own individuality,—and a rhapsody on the art and its divine principles; which art and which principles naturally find their illustration in the jack-anapes himself who commends them.

For his own sake, therefore, the writer is bound to supply a rationale that shall tally with the results of each artistic perception, and to free himself from the reproach of an exposition too servile in its glorification of a limited or spurious sensibility. Besides, his appreciation of effects, being possibly out of proportion to his executive power, may not have sufficient indirect testimony in the latter to win for it the respect which virtually it might deserve. On the other hand,

though his executive power may be considerable, it may be partial; and narrow, in so far as it may be imitable. He is, consequently, bound to show that he has a wider appreciation of what is beautiful in expression than is registered in his own practice. The contradiction might quite well arise, of an analyst with inferior executive power, who yet shows a greater knowledge of effects, not on account of his superior analytic perception (which might easily happen), but on account of his wider sympathy with artistic effects, than another of greater intensive susceptibility. And a methodical analysis is thus demanded, not merely as a means of the proper interpretation of sensibility to the reader, or of reconciliation between two hostile modes of artistic perception, but through a blunt necessity, as the only test of artistic insight, whether existing in connection with executive sensibility, or not.

It scarcely needs to be said that the sort of rationale which is here contemplated, is in every case a passive rationale; and that critical science repudiates the conjuring up of factitious reasons, as on a level with the practice of the auctioneer who is paid on commission. It may be added that the philosophic method is the one to be adopted by the critic, were it for no other purpose than that of self-defence. The tendency of most readers is, on the one hand, to agree on indifferent matters with a critic who agrees with their opinions on other points; and, on the other hand, to be ill-disposed on indifferent points to a critic who generally disagrees with them. It is his dignity as a critic which the scientific method secures; since it enables him to free himself, in the one instance, from the charge of having failed through his own weakness or bad taste, and, in the other, of having succeeded merely through

favouritism. Finally, it is the tendency of the method to lower the apparent transcendence of the effects which are explained. An effect, unanalysed at two removes, is as transcendent to explication, and, prior to explication, is confounded under the same category of transcendence, as one at twenty removes. The critic is not in all cases, therefore, anything so very portentous in the matter of sensibility. Nor is he interested in concealing that many of his supposed new effects are only original, because for the first time formally stated, or explicated in new relations to each other, or from having been casually overlooked in a field that potentially is open to all, or having been perceived under circumstances of accidental facility yielded by proficiency in kindred sciences.

As to the actual results arising in any particular instance from the attempted transmission of the sensibility, it is clear that no absolute maximum can be guaranteed, even under a scientific process. A man whose natural sensibility is unequal in keenness to his intellect will by his unassisted efforts be unable to rise in the appreciation of artistic beauties. Yet so great potentially is the energy of the human susceptibility, acting in connection with the pure intellect, that when the rationale of the effects is explained to him (which rationale he could not have devised, simply because for him the effects did not exist), the sensibility will mount towards the point at which he has apprehended the other. And if it moves upwards by a fraction, the expedient is justified of colleaguizing with it the analytic intellect; since without such a confederate, even under the contemplation of the sublimest models, the sensibility would not have travelled by that fraction towards the point which, in spite of its weakness, it has reached. In the converse case, the sensibility being

great as the analytic force is small, it is the former which acts by way of stimulus to the latter. The result in this instance is that of a proper discipline. For the untutored sensibility, which is apt to be partial and to run riot in extremes, science points out severer beauties, and beauties simpler and plainer in their subordinate value.

It is essentially a corollary from this, and in keeping with the whole tenor of the discussion, that the scientific method is the invariable regulator and guide, whether for the development of a sympathy with art where it is rudimentary, or for the moderating of it where it is in excess. The method of the instructor is not always positive, but often negative; though always for the sake of some positive result. And that this discipline of his does not necessarily travel from a lower degree to a higher will counterbalance the objection which may be raised against the method on the score of elevating commonplace to the rank of genius, and so degrading genius to the level of what is too easily to be reproduced. This objection may now be added as supplementary to the other two.

3. The more transcendental the effect that is to be communicated, there is the greater necessity that it shall be explicitly communicated: but the more explicitly it is communicated, the more chance will there be of its becoming *mechanical*. Now what the method has to do is not to work the lowest sensibility immediately, or even ultimately, up to the highest—any more than it has to do with training the dray-horse into the racer. What it aims at is a proficiency from stage to stage, and from an initial stage in each case to a final stage proportioned to the latent capacity of the individual. The proficiency which it seeks to establish is



mechanical, in so far as it is easy and complete. But it is just on that account organic; since the effects are only reproducible in so far as they involve discrimination, and the discarding of vicious and less pertinent alternatives. Nor can that happen without the power to apprehend that this or that turn of thought under formation is or is not allowable on the score of relevance. What took place in analysing the presupposed sensibility is now taking place conversely in the application by the sensibility of what has been given to it through the presupposed analysis. When, therefore, a writer shows that he discerns what, in certain circumstances, is or is not relevant, he must be admitted to be in possession of the principle—a principle that being continually more under control works more rapidly, and therefore more organically, as manifested in its power to *vary* the form of expression; making easy what it holds, and making easy in order to hold. Otherwise, there is nothing of the nature of a *nostrum* in this scientific treatment, any more than of encouragement to a quavering and paralytic imitation of the more sublime effects.

In so far as the scientific method is the true method both of attaining and expounding the rationale of literary beauties, any illustration of its principle is not more a vindication of it than a condemnation of every other. Properly speaking, it is not vindicated, but freed from misapprehension. Since its merit is not distinguished from the merit of any other method, in the same way as homœopathy might be vindicated by one physician as against allopathy by another. It is not opposed to any

other as a more catholic to a less catholic, a more dignified to a less dignified, a more effective to a less effective. It is blankly the only method; and beside it every other is false. No absolute vindication of it, therefore, is needed, and no formal condemnation of any other. The final objection, however, is not one that applies to it as contradistinguished from possible rival methods—the other two do apply to it in that sense—nor does its being rebutted imply anything against them. That objection is one that might be brought against any art, and amounts to the charge against the art that it is too practical—which is no objection whatever, but a clumsy compliment. The only objection, in fact, on that score would be the second, viz. that it is *not* practical; which the method evades by enabling learners to reproduce, and, where that is impracticable, to appreciate, effects; distributing a greater excellence in expression generally, and an increased appreciation of effects that are not imitable.

What concerns finally the positive results of the theory of Style—its practical relations to other sciences—may be summarily indicated.

1. For Philosophy generally it may be regarded as a special introduction, like Logic and Grammar, either as preliminary or complementary to these. It is quite legitimately a propædæutic, since it contains a special discipline. The other relations which it has to philosophy—its secondary relation, as illustrating in its own details the *principle* of philosophy, and its final relation, as possibly an integral moment of philosophy, and having in and for philosophic science an inseparable significance, as itself the principle of *Critique*—do not concern us at this moment.

Psychology in general might be expected to reflect upon the science of literature a light, and that no intermittent light. But so much more chance is there of finding recurrent phenomena—apart from all resorts to cross-illumination from *abnormal* phenomena, which of themselves induce confusion—imbedded in literary expression, that there is more likelihood of literary science reflecting light upon psychology. Not otherwise did Logic stand in relation to psychology, as an offshoot from it, in certain respects, and derivatively an exponent of mental operations in spheres that showed themselves by no means so amenable to the laws of pure psychology as the facts of literature. The science of Style stands side by side with that of Logic ; and mediates between the abstract intellect and pure sensibility, which in turn is bounded by the anomalies that scowl and gibber on the outskirts of Medical Psychology.

2. Within the sphere of psychology Art in general falls itself to be treated. And the science of Style, just in proportion as its principles are stated with authority, cannot fail to reflect a light upon the arts, any more than they reciprocally upon it. Especially it must add its testimony to that of Painting (an art that is infinitely further advanced), in regard to the analysis of Music, which, in so far as melody and the other concrete phenomena are concerned, is scientifically a blank. In this relation it is an isolated science, not organically connected with fundamental principles of psychology.

But more decisively, as connected with those effects which appeal to the eye, on the one hand, and to the ear, on the other, literary science is central to all artistic criticism. It is not merely one among the branches of art, and (since it

falls to be taken into account in any complete survey of art), indispensable to scientific completeness. It comes to affect and modify the general conception of art, which, being true only in so far as it takes notice of all the varieties and in their leading ramifications, is headlong in acknowledgment of this its most catholic form. Literary science must, therefore, radiate an influence upon art that practically will make itself felt, not merely in the suggestion of individual relations to the artist, under the rapprochement of the total science, but in moulding the judgments of artists of one class with regard to those of another. Supreme pity it is, when jealousy, the jealousy of irritation to inferiors, and of animosity to men of equal or of higher powers, is permitted to stifle the genial sympathy which should belong to art. The landscape painter knows himself, on the ground of high conception and of delicate execution, to be above the house-painter. But he feels much more inclined to sympathy with the latter, when his spirit is professionally roused: and that not because, but in spite of the fact that the acknowledgment of the nexus between the two arts is not so much due to catholic sentiment as to a refined intellectual perception. Even if such jealousy were the rule, however, among artists of the same class, the widening of the boundaries of art, showing the inoculation of the various arts with each other, by extending indefinitely the opportunities for jealousy instead of fostering bad feeling is more likely to do away with it altogether.

3. There is one sphere, finally, for which, as a preliminary study, the theory of Style is less of a scientific luxury, and more of a necessity, that, viz. of literary criticism; for which it cannot fail to supply a rich fundus of operative principles. Owing to its scientific cohesion, it has an advantage in in-

fluencing the other branches of literary art that is not possessed by unsystematic criticism. And from isolated criticism—the criticism that is applied to separate works or fragments of works—it is still further distinguished by being removed above the element of personality; and of personality in both its forms. In the first instance, it is spared the temptation, or the necessity, of criticising individual writers. And in the second, it evades such circumstances of the critic's own personality as the want of space, the necessity of a treatment that shall be popular, diffuse, and without regard to any scientific basis, and more specially, a position on a staff of writers, where, the general tenor of thought being prescribed, the critic is not entirely free, or where, if its tenor is promiscuous, he finds little reason for preserving consistency.

Absolutely central to the *sciences* which control literary criticism Style must always be. Psychological distinctions manifest themselves here most appreciably. At no point, therefore, is its culture unattended by a reflex illumination of these sciences, which present such Pacific expansions of novelty for speculation. Itself forms the first in the order of analytical development; the second being that general science which has for its main divisions Poetry, Philosophy, etc. The third is the science of Rhetoric, the synthesis and application of both; which may be viewed, in the latter respect, as a special science, in the former, and by way of comprehending the others, as equivalent to the theoretical generally in literary science.

The sciences in this triad, while they are complementary to each other, and admit of a natural sequence in their

treatment, admit of being treated independently of one another. At the same time they all acknowledge the following method of division, (1) as a body of facts shown in their scientific cohesion, (2) as a body of principles shown in their ultimate significance, and (3) as a body of truth shown in its relations to praxis. Accordingly the immediate science divides itself as, in the first place, the Analytic of Style, in the second, the Logic, and in the third, the Synthetic of Style. With regard to which partition it is to be noted, in the first place, that the nomenclature is ambiguous, in so far as the *method* is concerned, that being in the Logic as much analytic as in the technical Analytic itself. In the second place, the Logic, with which this volume is engaged, usurps the place of the Analytic; the order is transposed; the inversion being a matter of scientific propriety and of convenience. The deductive portion, however, which the Logic represents, founds exclusively on the inductive, represented by the Analytic (by which indeed it was suggested). Does the Logic, therefore, contain more or less than is warranted by the other, it errs, certainly by inadvertence, possibly by fallacy. The Analytic of Style, along with the Synthetic, or third and final section, is for the time withheld. Not unnaturally the speculative treatment by itself may seem to exhibit a certain heartlessness of abstraction. And to exhibit Style abruptly in its unity, its principle, is doubtless to make it somewhat abstruse for the general reader. Nevertheless it is here, in any event, that the supreme *nisus* must be made. The Analytic is only secured, whether by anticipation or not, through a rationale of the fundamental principles of Style in their ultimate coherence—after which to pursue the theme into its separate sections is mere undress and holiday scramble.

# THE LOGIC OF STYLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OF STYLE GENERALLY.

#### *Section I. Of Expression Generally.*

##### 1.

THAT is a natural distinction which obtains between Thought as it exists in the mind *per se*—Thought pure and essential—and Thought as formulated in Expression. The distinction is natural in so far as it is first fundamental, and secondly obvious. And it holds not merely of Thought generally, but of Thought in particular. It is true, therefore, of every result of mental activity in which Thought and Expression coexist; what is contemplated being, not an order of cases in which the antithesis basks between two quasi-equivalent terms, of which the one is a spurious or precarious form of the other, but the universal case, in which it glares between the two relations of any term, considered in the one view as Expression, and in the other as Thought.

No antithesis can be conceived more universal, since it is an antithesis whose principle is involved in every expression. No principle the most universal can be expressed

which does not involve *it*. But this is not the entire truth. It has a distinctive mode of involution, superadded to the other and arising from it. Lord S. holds that Mr. Y. is the proper person to fill a vacant office of state. That he means what he says is one thing; but that it implies something else in addition is another, as is clear from this, that his assertion gives offence to Lord T., who presumably holds another view, since he contradicts the view of Lord S. And he seconds his contradiction by the avowal that Mr. X. is the person for the situation. But having avowed so much, he likewise *implies* (what is painfully disagreeable to Lord S.) that Mr. Y.'s claims are not for a moment to be put in comparison with those of his respected friend Mr. X. And if Lord S. cherishes animosity against Lord T. it will be not so much because it was asserted that Mr. X. was worthy of the place, as because it was implied that his candidate and *protégé* Mr. Y. was not. If, indeed, you accept the expression of favour shown for his client by each of the noble lords, you will be convinced that both ought to have the place; but if you accept his implication, you will see that both are equally unfit. Wherever, therefore, a principle is expressed, it is not involved. And conversely, where it is involved, it is not expressed. Now the peculiarity of our principle—that of the distinction between thought and expression—is that the truth which it expresses is at the same moment also involved or implied. For since every principle that is expressed involves this principle, and this principle is now expressed, it follows that this principle involves this principle, *i.e.* involves itself. Q. E. D. Itself is involved by itself, and is itself an illustration of itself. The implication in the case we con-



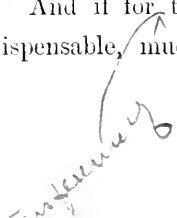
sidered first is not, of course, the same in kind with the latter implication, which is more strictly an involution. It was introduced merely by way of oblique illustration. On reading a proposition, its implication (in the proper sense) is the first to occur to any one. A higher reflection is needed to suggest to itself the relation which in addition it involves—the antithetic relation of thought and expression—as well as the universality of that involution; and still a higher to perceive that this is not merely an abstract relation, but a concrete—a fact coincident with its own principle, and a subject amenable to its own laws.

COR.—No distinction is held with the most lively chance of being realised, until it is seen in a concrete case. And generally such an illustration is hardest to bring to light, when it is most necessary that it should be forthcoming to vindicate the principle—in many cases to enforce it, in some even to make it intelligible. In this instance there is no such difficulty. The principle of the distinction is universal. Allowing for the extreme of abstruseness and complexity, it provides also for the extreme of simplicity. A simple thought, therefore, is as completely an illustration of the antinomy in its relation to expression as a complex.

## 2.

The independence in the mutual relations of thought and expression is one that practically holds true only of thought, and for expression is quite nugatory. For the latter the distinction is purely an abstract, not an operative distinction. For the former, too, it is only practical within certain limits. The activity of thought must, as a rule, be enhanced and multiplied by permitting a formula, and with a result whose

magnitude is often inversely as the force employed. I do not mean simply in such a case as that of an intellectual revolution, whose influences radiate through a purely literary medium; since that suggests too advantageously for illustration the inseparable element of expression, and its value as a medium—but in an order of cases where both elements are combined in by no means a similar degree of harmony and purity. In a political revolution, for example, there is one constant and animating element of *thought*, whether propagating itself by mere animal contagion of sympathy, or by sympathy of a more intellectual type. Which element is radically the same with that in the other case, and its conditions of success are essentially the same, and its mode of working is in principle the same. The prominent fact in this instance, as in the other, is the *communication* of the influence, which again we will suppose to have radiated from a solitary individual. Thus between the origin and the result, the obscure origin and the vast result, there is, if we look forward, merely the fact of a silence; if we look backward, merely the fact of a silence negated. Simply in his own person the initiator could not have affected what, by this negation of his silence, he has virtually effected. Otherwise he must single-handed have done the whole work, manned the batteries, marched in a body to the point of attack, etc. And just in proportion as he discarded expression, would he become increasingly unable to fulfil his mission, when it was becoming increasingly necessary that he should fulfil it. The more thought is required, therefore, the more does expression as a coefficient mount into importance. And if for thought, in certain relations, expression is indispensable, much more is thought indispensable to



expression; since only in and through thought is expression possessed of a living and elastic energy.

1. Considered in their *ultimate* relation to each other, thought has a regulative value for expression. To say that expression has no significance apart from thought is the same thing as saying that it has no existence apart from thought: its very existence founds upon its being significant. For it is to be noted that this significance is not the figurative thing that is commonly represented by the term in relation to individual expressions. It is, in fact, the condition of their existence; which existence, in its turn, becomes the condition of the derived significance as popularly understood. The meaning of the symbol "brand," for instance, is for us that of a billet under consumption by fire, and reduced more or less to a smouldering red. So long as it preserves this form, every Englishman understands what is meant. But let the letters be transposed, so that they shall read "bnard," and instantly for us it becomes unintelligible. Its total significance has not disappeared, however; only its actual significance has disappeared. Its potential significance remains; its precise significance for us now consisting in this that it is *unintelligible*, *i.e.* not directly and immediately significant. For the savage in the same way a very simple sign may produce discomfiture, as before something which he can easily reproduce, but which he cannot interpret. That discomfiture arises not more from ignorance than from knowledge; it being the special aggravation of the case that to his perception of the sign he adds so much acquaintance with the principle of signs generally, as to decide that this sign is not accidental, but for somebody has an obvious

interpretation that is denied to him. The occasion of his perplexity is the same with that of the art of the professional decipherer. In the one case, however, the possible significance of symbols mediates only to conscious recognition of ignorance, in the other to its removal.

2. It is upon thought that the positive and *immediate* significance of every expression depends. Expression has no operative value, except as being the medium of propagation for thought; a truth which holds particularly in relation to expressions connected in a series, since that depends entirely upon the logical movement of the thought, and the associations inseparably connected with each expression. Of which express corroboration is found in the fact (apparently irreconcilable with the principle) that a meaning may be gleaned from propositions whose terms are not separately clear. The onus of the weak terms has simply been borne by the stronger, which, but for their own integrity, must themselves have succumbed under the extra responsibility. The proposition has proved intelligible in spite of the casual unintelligibility of one of the terms, not in spite of the rule which demands the intelligibility of all the terms. Under the latter alternative the meaning of the proposition as a whole would not have been made out. And very specially it is overlooked, in arguing for the contradiction of the rule by this apparent exception, that in the final result the word *is* intelligible; what is contemplated in the rule being that no term shall be introduced which may absolutely withstand the plenary power of a passage to interpret itself, a power of interpretation that extends even over its obscure members. For there is a separate reason why any superficial canon,

ordaining the exclusion of obscure terms, should be suspended. What the familiar terms of the proposition are commissioned to raise to their own status is invariably a term that is not absolutely unfamiliar, but simply is not yet quite explicitly comprehended. And what they do is to ratify, under a specific collocation of ideas, what had been left inchoate under other collocations, though prepared by these successively for that ratification. It is because the number of alternatives was limited, under which the unknown term could be understood, that it has been understood. And it is the other terms in the connection which have been exactly the agency (for I represent them collectively, not individually as agents) in reducing these alternatives from indeterminateness to an operative and influential definiteness. That agency evidently is not the one to be overlooked. And yet it *is* the agency that is overlooked, in saying that the meaning has been reached independently of the connection between expression and thought. To deny the interdependence is in fact as rational as, in the converse case, to complain of the want of news in a public journal, in the forgetfulness of the circumstance that one had previously gone the round of all the contemporary papers within reach.

3. *Indirectly* thought is always present in expression. This is what the mechanical reader chiefly misses—the suggestiveness of certain collocations of thought. For there is a very trenchant distinction between the man who reads with just enough intelligence to surmount the meaning of every proposition as it reached him, and the man who reads with active intelligence sufficient to explicate for himself the associations with which the

terms of a proposition may exalt and reflect its primary significance.

“She came to the village church  
And sat by a pillar alone ;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd,  
To find they were met by my own.”<sup>1</sup>

The situation is infinitely natural—the evasive quiescence of the maiden, confronted by the eternal, aggressive masculine gaze—for else how could the boy *know* that she had lifted her eyes only once?—and the disruption, in which, through a mere gleam, a quiver, all is for *her* undone, and the very quiescence has become for *him* treacherously significant. But the circumstances, but the associations—the fusion of sentiment at that exact point where the spiritual merges into the sensuous—the intensity of ritual suggestion, variously expounded by the solemn agencies of the ceremonial, mystically by the organ, articulately by the priest, and by the worshippers in a murmured unison that is half mystical, half articulate—confounded and overborne by the intensity of human passion, that ought to be in antagonism to it, but *is* not, does not strive with it, therefore, but leagues it subtly with itself, and so helps to concentrate and amplify the sense of communion—a communion equivocal, and founding expressly upon a truth equivocally applied, viz. Love—all this perishes as in a vacuum to the careless reader. In this relation, therefore, he may legitimately be styled mechanical, either from his want of the power of reflection, or from his

<sup>1</sup> From Mr. Tennyson's “Maud.”

want of the power of attention, interfering with the natural action of the other. Not that every passage will bear the same stress of reflection. The difficulty often is to avoid reflection. Indeed an evil motive in criticism, whether of partiality for or against a writer, where it does not manifest itself in tampering with the views expressed by him, will manifest itself in tampering with the expression of these views—in reading for profound what is superficial, and for superficial what is profound. And the rationale of the fact which is so vaguely expressed in saying that a man sees in the writing of another more or less than there is to be seen, is precisely this, that unduly he masses and brings into relief, or fails duly to integrate and gather into a focus the collateral suggestions of the text.

COR.—No distinction more visionary could be drawn than that which it might be attempted to draw between the organic in expression and the mechanical. Such a distinction (if it has any meaning at all, apart from that indicated in § 1) can only take effect in relation to the movement of full-blown propositions. Now it is here precisely that the power of expression in the way of oblique suggestion is most valuable, for reciprocally controlling and modifying the meaning of the constituent terms in a proposition, so as to preserve its organic unity. Let us, for instance, examine this proposition: "The prejudices of society have not been found directly to aid its progress." If we subtract the word "not" from the proposition, we shall have committed a most comprehensive felony upon the tenor and direction of the thought. It ran from east to west: we have made it run from west to east. But if, reintroducing the "not," we expunge the word "directly," we shall effect substantially the same result. The

well-being of a state would doubtless be increased, if that malignity of prejudice were absent, which often springs from local or individual rivalry. Yet that may help to breed competition and higher activity in branches of trade that else might languish. And so prejudice does not absolutely impede the progress of society, but indirectly abets it. Other flexions might be given to the proposition, such as that "immediately," or "finally," or "unconsciously," or "impalpably," or "paradoxically," or "naturally," "the prejudices of society have been found to aid its progress." But always another inflection is given to the sense. Expressions the most contradictory, such as "paradoxically," and "naturally," may on occasion be used indifferently; and expressions like "unconsciously" and "impalpably" (where the one is as it were the specific form, the other the generic) may be substituted for each other. But there is no expression, however faintly differing from another, for which, in precise writing, most circumstances are not crucial in applying its distinction from that other.

In regard to which it may be observed, that the new specific terms that are continually being made do not tend to supersede the old, any more than they do in the mind of the individual writer—old terms revealing themselves to his mind more explicitly and completely, and new terms filling up *lacunas* in thought hitherto unsuspected. In both instances the movement is universal, that of a tide, not of a wave. And it is only by relation to the terms of older standing that the new are enabled to maintain their position. The old is not therefore indefinite, because the new happens to be specific, nor the new incomplete, because the other is more universal. The coarse and grotesque way of interpreting innovation in



expression is that all fresh terminology supersedes the ancient, and is useless; further that it tends unnecessarily to multiply terms, and is therefore harmful, which is precisely to say that the needle tends to supersede the chisel. Meantime the value of the needle generally consists in this, that it does *not* do every kind of work, and in particular that it is not available for the work to be done by the chisel. And to put a stop to the variation of terms before the proper limit, is not merely to suppress the immediate forms of variation, but the possible ramifications of these in arrear. For every new thought there must arise a corresponding expression. Nor can any other principle be laid down, by which the number of ideas shall be increased for every term from this limit to the abracadabra or ideal formula, which shall embrace explicitly the whole cycle of knowledge and being, the sum of things actual and possible. An economising of terms has no use apart from an economising of ideas. But such an expedient as that of diminishing the number of terms would never reduce the sum of ideas. If it could, it would do so wrongly. The only real economy that is possible in the matter is in the suppression of the riderless and supernumerary among terms. And so it is that economy is in exact harmony with the converse canon, viz. that every expression shall have its independent thought. To multiply expressions, therefore, for a single idea is not to enhance the chances of its being distinguished, but to defeat them; and in this case to violate the canon of reciprocity by sheer blankness of meaning, as in the other by sheer multiplicity of interconfounded association. Hence, and on both sides, the essential vice of modern slang; which may be described generally as the tendency, on the one hand, to elevate expressions drawn from

the vulgar quasi-professional classes, etc., and on the other to degrade expression, by drawing into a comical quasi-figurative reference terms of ordinary and even catholic significance. Thus, on the one side, we have a purposeless multiplication of terms for such acts as stealing, running away, etc., and on the other, a burdening of certain terms, such as "governor" and "lot" (*e.g.* "a queer lot" applied to an individual) with a superfetation of meanings. This happens obviously within limits. Since no possibility of leisure, no possibility of malice, could ever enable an individual or a number of individuals to multiply terms for *every* thought; and no possibility of indolence or of preoccupation can prevent men from fitting up *most* of their ideas with an adequate terminology. But excesses and defects do exist more or less in all languages to disturb the just equilibrium between the innovations of language and the stagnation of thought. In so far as these *tend* to neutralise each another, thought is kept in activity. Otherwise, in individual instances, they constitute separate sources of imperfection—such as might be found in polyandry superadded to polygamy.

### 3.

Expression is to be regarded as coinciding with thought; but inasmuch as every thought (with certain obvious exceptions) is complex, a dual or *equivocal* relation arises for expression, that, *viz.*, in which it corresponds wholly to the thought, and that in which it corresponds to it only in part. This happens constantly in composition, where terms are used now in relation to their generic meaning, now in relation to their specific. One may say, for example, that "curiosity led a man to watch the movements of the celestial bodies,"

where he means simply "the desire of knowledge," disengaged from the element of pettiness and gratuitousness which is implied in the actual statement. Or again, he may say that "the desire of knowledge induced a man to open his friend's writing-case, and examine his correspondence," when he means curiosity. In the one instance he says too much, in the other too little; and in both cases we know analytically by how much, the measure of excess in the one being identically the measure of defalcation in the other. But the novelty is this, that it is by the very inaccuracy of the statement that we are able to correct it, and by substituting the one reciprocal for the other to give our amended version of the truth. The principle of specification has been abused in the one case, and neglected in the other. But *virtually* it has righted itself. And by way of compensation its value now mounts into its place and is realized, when we present the truth in its authorized form. Thus it happens that expression may be represented in two aspects, under the one of which it is exceedingly vague, and under the other exceedingly definite. A charge of verbalism, for example, is a charge of meaninglessness. And, on the other hand, expression is regarded as the seal and redundance of faithfulness in all communication. The one founds upon the indisputably arbitrary nature of signs considered in themselves, the other on the indisputable teleologic value of signs. Convertibly thought and expression are the same; a *virtual* coincidence being secured, whether the expression is something more, or less, or else, than the thought. But their coincidence may be actual as well as merely virtual. And hence the relation of expression to thought is equivocal.

If every term as it is met with in general writing were

to be understood always in its *special* incidence, and not with reference to its proximate terms, its genus and species, it would begin to fluctuate in its meaning; that meaning would begin to be shared by other terms, and it itself by degrees might (quite apart from the dialectical tendency of language) drift into other relationships, and become the bearer of successive associations widely differing from each other. That, for the most part, the phrases in present use have not yielded to such a tendency, is to be ascribed to the fact of the counter-tendency to revert after deflection to the original signification. These terms preserve in a double sense the consistency of language, both in themselves, and for others, by acting as centres of stability amid fluctuation. But occasionally they themselves fluctuate; and in so far language is elastic and not rigid; as, with regard to the essentially unstable terms, it is elastic, not ductile. It gains its virtual immobility by seasonable fluctuation. But that literary effect varies, not in relation to language alone, (and, for example, the very contradictory expression of what one means is a form of wit) and bears an equivocal relation through what is itself essentially stable, may be illustrated from mathematics, which hitherto has shown itself the most adamant and inexorable of standards. Fifty pounds are fifty for the banker and for everybody. But the literary significance of fifty is different from its financial. Three may be more significant. But also fifty may be more significant than three. This significance then is variable, and affronts arithmetic, first by discarding its principle of proportion, and, in the next breath, by coming back to it. But note how for all that it is indebted to the arithmetical immobility.

For if the number fifty were not always the same, whether existing at a premium with regard to three, or at a discount, who could guarantee that the one, which had stood up with alacrity to discount the other, should not have transmuted itself into some third number when the time came for it to be discounted? The invariability of the number, therefore, which is the safeguard of the banker against embezzlement by his clerks, is precisely the safeguard of literary significance.

COR.—Writing generally consists in a variation of the two styles of absolute precision and merely relative precision. And so long as that variation is preserved, it is to a certain extent indifferent in individual cases which style is observed. The ideal absurdity would be to use the generic and the specific as convertible where they are not, and to neglect using them as convertible where they are indifferent. To say, therefore, that it is indifferent which standard is used, does not imply that the privilege of having alternate standards is to be abused. A writer, from extreme prepossession or carelessness, may use a generic term for a specific, and *vice versa*; so as to bewilder his readers by ambiguity, or even absolutely to mislead them. In this case the alternative standard becomes simply pestilent. A second order of cases is that in which it is really indifferent, as to the sense, whether the expression is absolutely precise or not. Here there is a legitimate use of the standard as supplementary to the other. But thirdly, there are occasions on which this standard becomes virtually or even absolutely a complementary standard. Thus, for example—what suits eminently the elliptical method of poetical expression—it is so in the lines:—

*Like* form in Scotland is not seen,  
Treads not *such* step on Scottish green—

a rare truism in itself, since notwithstanding that certain types of gait might accompany certain types of figure, everybody knows that no two men have the same shape and carriage. But for that very reason it is seen that something more is hinted than the truistic fact—a comparison within the comparison, and an expression of pre-eminent or paramount dignity associated with form and step. Again the antithesis of the idea may be employed to convey a transferred meaning. Thus in the expression :—

Fallen heroes want  
Yonder in heaven their crown of blessedness  
Till the last *bondsman* clasp unfettered hands  
O'er the last slaver whelm'd beneath the wave,

the word “bondsman” is taken to designate a special agent in a significant circumstance, where *ex hypothesi* the individual is no longer a bondsman. To such an extent does the principle of expression sublate itself in its literal form (and quite apart from every metaphorical usage of terms) for a relative and virtual intelligibility; and in special cases by hinting the substantial truth where more is expressed, by integrating it where less, and by rectifying it where the reverse is expressed.

## *Section II. Of Style in its relation to Expression.*

### 4.

*Style is the Differential in Expression* : and this, which exhibits it in its most characteristic reference, is its scientific definition.

In relation to Style, expression, which tends indefinitely to extend or differentiate itself as regards thought, must be assumed to have reached a limit. It is very clear that Style is not the differential of expression, in the same way that

expression may be regarded as the differential of thought. (1) Expression does not reach a limit in order to allow style to take up the process of specification. Such a limit would be arbitrary; and it would be unjust to expression to lay down any terminus at which its distinctive principle was to be superseded. (2) Style does not consist in stray specifications made by individual thinkers. That would be unjust to itself. These casual terms can only show themselves in obedience to the general laws of differentiation; and in so far as they do that they belong to expression, not to style. It is distinctly a proof of this (what might appear in direct contradiction of it) that every expression in use at any period must have been struck out by an individual. Since precisely to the extent that it was necessary would it be adopted, with a rapidity that would confound the individuality of the discoverer. Of innovation in terminology only these four kinds are possible, (1) that which is required and is adopted, (2) that which is required but is not adopted (not being published widely enough for immediate adoption), (3) that which is not required but is adopted, and (4) that which is not required and is not adopted. These classes, however, reduce themselves to two, the first and the last; since the other two tend to right themselves, and in part by neutralising each other. Now (with regard to the fourth) there are many terms that sprout up in the sportiveness of correspondence, or in the heat and condensation of journalism, that are literally ephemeral. And connecting themselves with no catholic principle of expression, they cannot be viewed as possibly approaching a thing so organic as style. As to the terms of the first class, it is clear that they are few, and can never serve as the exponent of a

writer's individuality. Besides, being engrossed by other writers, they lose, except to the antiquary, any value as having been originated by him; the very permanence of literature, which guarantees the perpetuation of the term, gainsaying its permanence as affecting our estimate of the originator. It is to his use of the common items of expression that a man owes his individuality. The limit which expression is assumed to have reached for style is not, therefore, a limit at which *innovation* in expression begins; which would be to extend the limit that *ex hypothesi* is final. That process is the very one which we must assume to have ceased. For now the movement for style is precisely in the opposite direction. Accordingly to differentiate expression is obviously not to distribute it by diversification of individual expressions, but (3) to redistribute it, by combining and unifying a variety of these under a definite idiosyncrasy. The individuality in the one case is that of a fact, in the other that of a person—of individuals as against individuals, writers against writers, speakers against speakers. Formally the principle of the one is variety, that of the other unity. Only style tends also to differentiation in a mass, with a resultant variety of styles proportioned to the variety of individual expressions.

COR.—The relation of style to expression is one of complete interdependence. Expression being distinctively the basis of the other, there is no point in its extension by which style does not profit; being the sphere for the exhibition of style, which raises the potential in expression to the actual, there is no extension of style by which it does not profit. All that is assumed is, therefore, a certain totality of expression. Which totality, acting, in the second place, in combination



with psychological tendencies, is determined, in the third place, to a known variation and recurrence of certain forms of expression, forming in itself that totality of expression, in its extent or intensity, which we call a man's style. This is properly illustrated in the relation of the classical and Saxon elements in the English language. It has been shown (§ 2, p. 50) to be gratuitous and unscientific to treat the former element as if by possibility it could supplant the latter. Together they form a totality of expression, in which generally (1) the Latin (as the typical exoteric element) is the differential of the Saxon. "World" for example has its definite significance, generally considered. But what of it in special relations—in relation to totality as compared with its own local sections? In that case it is "cosmopolitan." Or what of it again by way of relation to the transcendent whole of the universe, or as equivalent itself to that whole? It then becomes "sublunary," or "cosmical." And through the combination of these two elements it is that the genius of the English nation is realised in that special literary form which we call its "idiom." Out of that relation, however, arises another, in which each element becomes a separate function, or a separate aggregate of functions. Thus, roughly speaking, the Saxon takes cognisance of facts, the Latin of principles. More particularly, the Saxon is concerned with the domestic and the catholic sensibilities (in a nation so keenly alive, on the one hand, to the tendernesses, and, on the other, to the sublimities of human sympathy as the English) and the Latin with the abstract relations of things. Thus (2) in regard to the totality of expression, each becomes a *co-differential* with the other. Each represents a leading psychological distinction. Latin, as being the element which is *not* the vernacular,

and being superinduced upon the other (as the thinking of the adult is superinduced upon the thinking of the child), becomes valuable not for its being casually or immediately the negation of popular thinking, but positively for its catholic *precision*, which is the cardinal test and necessity of a scientific diction. On the other hand, the virtue of our Saxon lies in its simplicity, which is the necessity of a poetical diction. A writer's general bias will, therefore, be determined by the proportion in which the two elements mingle in his expression. For evidently it *is* a proportion, in which neither is found exclusively. And hence (3) the Latin and the Saxon become each *reciprocally* the differential of the other. If, in average use, these two elements bear a certain proportion to each other, then evidently the writer who uses more Latin than other people has that for the differential of his literary manner,—the quantity being supposed equal in all cases, he will use less of the Saxon. And similarly in the converse case. A more natural case, of course, is that of subvarieties in these elements. Thus, of two writers having a poetical and philosophic diction, one has in addition a scientific bias; that becomes his differential, not, however, simply in relation to the Latin compound, but to the whole complement of his expression. The Saxon is still a co-efficient to discriminate that complement from any other; what was expressed in the previous instance by extent, being now represented by intensity, as measured by recurrence.

## 5.

Since Style is to be viewed, first, as concerned with the relation of each individual writer to the totality of expression, it is concerned, secondly, with the relation of the totality of writers to the totality of expression, and mediately, in the

third place, with the individual in relation to the totality of writers. Each style thus becomes reciprocally the differential of every other. To speak mathematically, the style of every writer represents some function of every other.

As a literature grows, it becomes obvious that the tendency of its writers in succession is to diverge from each other. But at a certain point it begins to be suspected that the mode of the new writers is in part a reproduction of the old. The principle of variation, in fact, is limited. Moreover, it tends to a limit, viz. the circumference of all variations, which is itself a new variety. And under that, either as a fact realised, or as a possibility, the separate orders of expression are seen to be vitally connected with each other, in so far as they are efficient of this common manifestation. The process is threefold. (1) The resultant varieties may be regarded independently, as antagonistic and complementary to each other. (2) From their limited number, and the common relationships existing among all, they tend to intersect and coincide with one another. (3) These tendencies are combined, so as to involve an antagonism to each, and a coincidence with all, in a variety which comprehends, and therefore supersedes all the rest. In this latter case, which is the most interesting and important, the relation of the writer is equally one of immanence and transcendence. This transcendence is not that which A exercises over B because he has so many more effects at his call; since B, in respect of that which is immanent in himself, transcends A. It is because the great writer is *not* transcended by any that he transcends all. And though his transcendence founds on the same basis as theirs, viz. immanence, that immanence is not of the ordinary type, the

exclusive and *special* immanence of a distinctive range of expression absolutely his own. The ordinary immanence may be of two kinds, that which is common to all or that which is peculiar to each. In this case it is neither, but that which is peculiar to one in so far as it is distributed separately among all. Other writers of individuality, when the sum of all other individualities is taken, have something to add to it. To that sum he has nothing to add: it is identically his own distinction. If it is a sum of 25, in which A, B and C have each a share of one, it is clear that he transcends each by 24. Or if X happens to travel in the same way as himself, and musters up 13, him he transcends by 12; *i.e.* the gross result being taken, otherwise his superiority to X travels in a geometrical ratio. The ideal thus formed is no abstract ideal, but one that is essentially concrete, one in which all the elements are resolved. It is not meant, for example, that every peddling idiosyncrasy is included in the individuality of Shakspeare. But those elements of expression are included like the wit of Ben Jonson, which are possessed by certain poets in special measure, and which go to integrate a totality of their own. And especially those pure and formal elements, which in some degree are possessed by all true poets, structural felicity and modulated intensity of expression—in simple terms, mastery of quantity and quality. How the catholic behaves when united with the individual, may be seen (in a dialectical shape) in relation to nationality. What we mean by a classic, is a writer who represents adequately the genius of his country, with sufficient force superadded of his own to expound that genius and make it interesting. It is only, therefore, by coalescing with a certain degree of force in

individuals, that the genius of a nation becomes a co-efficient for its own illustration. It is quite another question to what extent the appearance of such an individual may be accidental, and whether it is the increase of the national intelligence, or the increasing richness of national characteristic, that is the immediate occasion of that illustration. I assume simply that the national bias will be found directly represented in its literature, apart from this as a possibility, that the very earliest literature was not preserved just because it was simple, and reflected no national complexity of character, while only such legends were preserved as were connected *ex hypothesi* with the doings of the race. But this very glorification of national tendencies and national interests, defeats itself by demanding too necessitously an increase of individual power. For obviously the supreme poet or the supreme thinker is not national, but reflects the catholic in all nationality. But his genius is not therefore anti-national. It is the danger of a partial acuteness to conceive that a catholic genius is of necessity opposed to a national. An English writer may, in the first instance, by accident have the genius of a Frenchman; in which case, of course, he *is* anti-national. Or, secondly, he may have a truly catholic genius, in which case his genius would infallibly be anti-national, but for the chance of its coinciding, in the third place, with the national genius, the nationality to which he belongs being the most catholic. The common elements are glorified by other nations in varying degrees, but by this in so perfect a degree, as to become indefeasibly its differentia. The catholic poets, the poets of intensity and compass, are those of England; the catholic thinkers, the systematic thinkers,

are those of Germany. And, as notoriously Shakspeare is the unique catholic poet, so notoriously Hegel is the unique catholic metaphysician. Absolutely catholic intellects they are neither of them, since both are only partial; and absolutely catholic only that nation can be pronounced which produces an intellect that shall be equally philosophic and poetical. But evidently it is unjust, it is a perversion, to exalt the individuality of either, as if it transcended the national genius by its catholicity; when it is expressly as being an outcome of that genius that it *is* catholic. Unjust it is to the individual, since it represents his catholicity as anti-national, which it is *not*, and to the nation, since it represents as accidental what is essential.

COR.—The function of a Logic is to give universals by eliminating particulars. That which is common to all men concretely in the midst of diversity, is the logical faculty; that which is common to them, in spite of their common logical faculty, is abstractly their diversity. Logic proper has to deal with the first universal. And a Logic of Style is concerned with the second, a universal as complete and scientific as the other; since every man has a differentia, as well as a ground of community with other men. This universal is *Mode*; a man's style being his mode, his manner, his mannerism. The general questions concerned with this mode are three. (1) As to the possible varieties of style which may be possessed by any writer. In this respect he may have a very complex differentiation; from the philosopher, for example, he may be distinguished by being also a poet, and *vice versa*; or from the poets and philosophers by some special poetical or philosophic faculty; or, through the same faculty, from those who like himself are both. (2) As to the

possible fluctuations in individual style within certain limits. Such may be produced by changes in health, by varying degrees of interest in the subject, or of aptitude for particular modes of expression, speaking and writing. (3) As to the coherence of his literary manner with his manner as a whole; how far that is controlled by his temperament, and consists with his personal habits and social bearing.

## 6.

The particular varieties of literary effect, with whatsoever complexity they may manifest themselves, rest notoriously upon a fundus of natural *sensibility*. This appears in three forms, (1) as creative, (2) as reproductive, and (3) as critical or negative.

That the same kind of power should be possessed by more than one man, does not make it less original, or what is meant specially by "genial." It is creative in so far as it is not communicable. And causing in the reader a desire to reproduce it, in the same breath it shows him his impotence to do anything but imitate it. For the distinction between reproduction and imitation is that the first obtains a revival of the principles of certain orders of effect, and the second merely a resemblance to certain isolated effects. And what imitation is ordinarily to reproduction, reproduction is in this case to creation; and accordingly, since *ex hypothesi* these effects are unique, any attempt to reproduce them falls to the level of imitation. For there are two orders of creative sensibility, which may be described as the faculty of developing the possibilities of expression. On the one hand it manifests itself as the power to devise new forms of

combination and simplification, etc., and on the other to mature new orders of individual effect. It is, for example, an approach to the expansion of style in the latter aspect, to produce a peculiar mode of fanciful or humorous expression. And to the expansion of it in its former aspect, it is a contribution, to discover a principle of transition by which the general sense of elegance or economy is enhanced, at the same time that the demands of the case for fulness are adequately met. The former element *tends* sometimes in the direction of eccentricity; which is in any case revolting, because it is either unaffected, in which case it is monstrous, or assumed, in which case it is insolent. But the eccentricity, which immediately I speak of, arises just from attempting externally to reproduce what is absolutely original in another man's expression, and so falling into grotesque travestie. And the tendency is the more dangerous, because the result is for many people so much more striking than quieter and more perfect effects. Hence its essential vulgarity, which consists, not in preferring what is loud to what is unobtrusive, but in preferring what is simply clumsy to what is forcible. For there is a sphere in which higher effects are attainable, and with the additional privilege of being legitimate, and not essentially futile. This is the alternative sphere indicated, in which the copyists may be as successful as the original artists, provided they have the power readily to appropriate the turns of thought devised by earlier writers, and to employ them in their variety and relevance. To a certain extent, therefore, this power is accompanied by a power that is critical or negative. Generally, it manifests itself in perceiving that certain turns of expression are in them-



selves vulgar and clumsy, and for ever, therefore, irrelevant. In its higher form, it consists of a discrimination of effects, which in themselves are valid, as invalid in certain relations—inadequate, redundant, or vicious. For not the perception merely or chiefly of what is good in itself is the test of true sensitiveness, but of what is good in certain circumstances. Such a sensibility will manifest itself, therefore, in the repudiation of every mode of expression that is incongruous with the prevailing cast of thought, or the general structure of a proposition; in the perception, that this or that expression requires to be expunged or modified, as affecting too severe a qualification of a certain idea, or requires modification before it can operate adequately as an exponent of the spirit of a certain passage. Most obviously, this capacity is useful in critically reorganising and re-modelling one's own compositions. Every writer feels the necessity more or less of altering his first draught of a composition for the better, not only in the conception and *motif*, and the modification of long reaches of thinking, by the resources of transposition, and the altering of distant proportions, or the interpolation of new ideas, etc., but in the diction itself.

COR.—What is good in an author's expression may be rather the reflex of good thinking otherwise, than the result of a general capacity for Style. The more logically, for instance, a man thinks, the less will he be disposed to write with any *extra* measure of gracefulness. Yet that of itself is a guarantee for a certain quality of elegance. And where he is most of all in a condition to benefit by his logic, is where it coexists with the independent facilities and graces of expression. There is, in fact, no collateral agency, whether of

intellect or of temper, that may not co-operate to individual force of style. And no writer is above being improved by the aid of the machinery which exists internally for ratifying his distinctive brilliance as an artist, in the way of reproduction and revision. Naturally, in connection with revision, it sounds paradoxical to say that a man is inevitably an artist, whose original execution leaves much to remodel, and no artist, because it leaves nothing to amend. For evidently it is just the impracticable blockhead, who will find it most difficult to vary his original conceptions. In this, however, he is formally on a level with the greatest of impromptu performers. And what is intended is, that, with every necessity for amendment, there must exist a corresponding ability to meet it. In the case of the blockhead, the necessity for improvement exists at a maximum, with the minimum power of counteraction; with the supreme artist it exists at a minimum, with the additional pleasant condition of a critical taste at its maximum. Certainly a happy adjustment applied to *continuous* expression is a crucial test of the artist, under conditions of success so liable to disturbance, even from physical causes. And if in such circumstances the mental balance is disturbed, it is evident to what extent it must draw upon its facilities for repeal and amendment. Apart from this, the critical faculty is constantly used in the original composition. And that it is not needed for subsequent correction is due, not to the spontaneity of the mind in that original effort having overridden the necessity for it, but precisely to its having itself been in full play; that it is required ultimately, being a sign *pro tanto* of its not having co-operated originally to produce a satisfactory result.

*Section III. Of Style in its relation in Rhetoric.*

## 7.

The method of Style is essentially that of a *Critique*, i.e. a separation or discernment of individual expressions from each other, in so far as it has to do with expression, and of individual complements of expression from each other, in so far as it has to do with individuals. This method, on the one side, is distinguished from the dialectical, by placing its specific results and items as ultimate and permanent, and expressly as not having a tendency to pass into each other. On the other, the science is distinguished from Rhetoric, whose function it is to apply the data of expression; and which stands, therefore, as the practical science of Style.

A man's literary power is *pro tanto* a fund of expression; indestructible, but capable of being modified within certain limits, of being extended or intensified, limited or suppressed. The final question, in the case where one writer is pitted against another, is as to the adaptation of their respective styles to the circumstances. And thus expressions begin to acquire invidiously, so to speak, and by way of rivalry, a certain value as opposed to each other. The duty of every artist is accordingly, (1) to develop his own special skill of diction, (2) to supplement it with whatever he may lawfully reproduce from the common fund of expression, and (3) to adopt the several varieties of diction to the separate circumstances in which he thinks accommodation is demanded—which may include expressly the abnegation of the more luxurious or even more catholic effects for the sake of the lower and coarser. The science of

this distribution, affiliating itself to Style at this point, is Rhetoric; and its function on the negative side is to contravene and truncate mere stylistic brilliance, where that is necessary—to reproduce spontaneity in chasteness of proportion, and the transcendental in the practical, and, generally, to insist on the subordination of immediate to mediate effect. Thus high literary effort upon a magnificent scale is a desirable thing in relation to the literary ideal. But the high style on occasion may be useless, and for effect virtually lower than one absolutely less forcible. That collision, however, may be resolved, and the former ideal restored, if it should happen that *culture* could be given, by not condescending to the immediate exigencies. There are degrees of merit in the different standards. Nor does the higher artist supersede the lower, even if *his* literary culture be merely secondary, and superinduced by the necessity to write, because some men must read him—*i.e.* are compelled to apply to him for instruction—who have no occasion to study the higher models. Even *he*, the journeyman author, the conscript, has it in his power to raise the art as an art, (1) by raising the average standard of execution, (2) the standard of appreciation, (3) the professional standard, stimulated by the non-professional sympathy, and reacting upon it.

COR.—This distinction is the broad external distinction between Rhetoric and Style, according to which the one is the *regulative* science of the facts which *constitute* the other. The condition of *origin* being satisfied, in Style, Rhetoric deals with the conditions of *result*. A man is bound, in the first instance, by individual, local, or professional bias; his individuality combating these elements perhaps, or coalescing with them to

a good or a bad purpose. These he may wish, in the next instance, to foster or to overcome for certain ends. And so there arises the teleologic ideal, according to which it is determined not what the man ought absolutely to be, but what he ought relatively to be.

## 8.

Style is distinguished more especially from Rhetoric, by taking account of ideas immediately connected with each other in detail, while Rhetoric is the science of passages and pieces in their totality. To regard an entire paragraph, as offering a relief to another, for example, is rhetorical and parastylic. The two sciences become thus complementary modes of viewing any particular passage. For it may quite easily happen that the individual expressions are good, but that the disposition of the larger masses is confused or disproportionate, or that the total conception is clear, but the diction clumsy, etc., there being thus not one criterion, but two criteria. The distinction is most easily illustrated from a complete piece, and one whose outlines are few even if complex, as for example a poem, which allows a special condensation:—

BIRTH AND DEATH.<sup>1</sup>

Ever gaze to each other two figures, one lit with the light  
Of earth's sunshine, and one in the shadow thrown back from the  
bright

Larger sun of the future. Lo, Birth, but a child : her bright hair,  
That life's breeze gently stirs on her forehead so snowily fair,  
Ripples golden and glad in the sunlight, and mirth's frolic beam  
In her eyes' azure dances, unwitting of that sombre dream

From "First Fruits and Shed Leaves:" by the Author of "The Wreck of the Northfleet."

That darkens the distance. *Joy-parted, her mouth seems to sip  
 With cleft coral the exuberant brightness that breaks on her lip.*  
 As frail-seeming and white as a mist-wreath, her garment o'erclings  
 Her flesh softly moulded and rosy as when the light springs  
 With last kiss from the ardent sunset to cloud in the east—  
 So pure are her young limbs and rosy, so dimpled and creased.

As silent and dark as a shadow, unmoved as a stone  
 That standeth all day in the desert, unseen and alone,  
 Waiteth Death : no breeze touches her *mantle that falleth right  
 down*

*Over feet that we see not and hands that we see not ; a frown*  
 Seems to drift down the distance and blight the fresh pastures of  
 life,

And an icy breath seems to blow from her and make the air rife  
 With tremblings. And yet as we gaze in her fathomless eyes  
 The charm of her beauty awakens, although her hair lies  
 White and thinly laid over her forehead's mysterious shade  
 (That looms with a beauty no earth-light may ever invade),  
 And her fine lips together are set in a sadness divine,  
 Too deep and too holy for sorrow—each loveliest line  
 Of her limbs 'neath her raiment of shadow a presence becomes,  
 And a scent broodeth round her far sweeter than odours of spices  
 or gums.

This poem in its totality is essentially subtle. There is, first, a broad and obvious antithesis between Birth and Death—Birth in her morning beauty, and Death in her austere repellant. But secondly, a contrast is introduced between Death in this aspect, and Death in a more auspicious aspect, as being spiritually its own euthanasia, and the emancipator of the soul into life. But is this all? Not, certainly, according to the genial significance of the poem. For in the third instance, there is the contrast between Death, no longer Death the sullen, but Death the serene, and the unchanged joyousness of Birth. And here is what *might* be the coincidence of

Death and Birth. Negate Birth, and you have Death; negate Death, and you have Birth. That is, in the ordinary dialectic. But the special subtlety of this conception is not merely, having differentiated Death from Birth, to differentiate it again from itself, but to differentiate it so that, under the last aspect, it shall still be differentiated from Birth, and not repeat any of the characteristic imagery *there*. The dialectic is the true dialectic, by which *both* elements are held resolved in a higher medium. Such is the *motif*, or rhetorical aspect of the poem. Now obviously enough, the imagery which runs in a series of parallels expounding the general conception, reflects in detail the dominant idea of the piece. But, apart from that, it has a purely stylistic value, according to the degree of beauty and precision with which it expresses the separate idea that it is intended to convey. Thus, independently, the italicised passages are perfect in their effect. The one expresses the redundancy of delicate sensuousness—delicate, because sipping just catches the aspect of the lingeringly parted lip, redundant, because the lip is painted as tasting, *i.e. receiving*, a radiance, of which its own redness is in part the cause, *i.e. diffuses*. The other expresses the sense of mystery, in the veiling of the feet and hands, since the hand and the foot are just the members that universally in ordinary use, and for the sake of freedom of touch and movement, are left uncovered by the mantle.

It happens that, mediately, through their relation to the common totality, individual expressions have a relation to each other, which are not immediately connected. Stylistic connection of individual propositions is with those which stand next to them in the process of thinking; rhetorical connection of separate thoughts is that in which they recip-

roccally illuminate each other at remoter distances. A piece like "Birth and Death," so rich in felicitous concurrences, and so frugal in its anxiety not to expend a single unnecessary thought or image, abounds in this kind of complementary significance. The beauty of Death has been demonstrated not merely to comprehend the beauty of Birth, but to transcend it. And that is the significance of "*a scent* broodeth round her," &c., as opposed rhetorically to the mere phase of vision in Birth. This reservation marks a severely intellectual style of treatment. For the sensuousness in the representation of Birth had reached, it might have been supposed, a limit. And yet beyond that limit, upon the necessity arising, the luxuriance is pressed, the scent expressing a redundancy of luxury that the mere sight could never give. A subtler sense is brought into action, and, as it happens, a rarer sensory even within that, for the effect is not deadened by a description of the scent, which simply is *not* that "of spices or gums"—an essence that no flame of earth may ever kindle, and that æons of ritual will not burn away. The significance of this part is enhanced by its position as the concluding idea of the piece. For by drafting the imagery into a separate world of sense, the movement of the poem, towards its climax, is translated suddenly into a transcendent region, and locked up into a perpetual rest, inviolate as cathedrals, and of cathedral stillness.

COR.—Apart from the indirect significance every individual expression ought to have in relation to the piece of which it forms a part, and from the significance it may reflect upon other individual expressions, it may occasionally have a direct rhetorical significance. Why, in the concluding phase of this



poem, should death be represented as sad with "a sadness divine, too deep and too holy for sorrow," when it is felt that (according to the Christian conception) she is the medium of immortality? Obviously enough, the association of jubilation being preoccupied by Birth, if the totality of the conception is to be integrated, a contrast must be preserved between the two. Yet that is quite beside the point. Even literary symmetry must vanish, must be abolished, unless it coincides with the radical truth on the question. It is also evident, but not more pertinent, that if Death were represented as jubilant, in a moment would go to ruin the primary conception of her as sullen. And as a matter of fact in the execution, this cohesion of the character is beautifully preserved against contradiction in the contrasted phases late and early—to match the melancholy sweetness of the one there is no scowl, but a frown, nor even a frown, but what "seems" to be a frown. That primary conception, nevertheless, gives the cue to the representation of Death, and is determined, antecedently to all artistic considerations, by the natural feeling which it betokens, that of instinctive awe. For here the poem is entirely subjective: her dreadful aspect representing our feeling of dread. And hence in the sequel her sorrow for us means our sorrow, our anxiety for ourselves; her attitude being one in spirit with our own; neither maliciously jubilant over her power of destruction, nor gratuitously jubilant over the reversionary gain; too "holy" for the one, too "deep" for the other. Nor is that any marvel, seeing that the mood of Death is too "deep" and too "holy" for sorrow; *a fortiori*, therefore, as regards rejoicing. Yet that which is too profound and too spiritual for vulgar grief, as it is for vulgar jubilation, is not joy, but sadness; and necessarily so, in accordance with the subjective feeling. But

why "deep," and why "holy" ? Because, in the one case, it is associated with reflection, in the other, because it is unselfish. And the grief of sadness is infinitely deeper than the grief of sorrow, because expounded by a power of reflection, by which Death sees herself as a universal agency, remembering all whom she has destroyed, and thinking of all those whom she must destroy ; and infinitely holier, because she grieves not for herself the inevitable destroyer, but for us whom she destroys. That is the philosophic rendering of the truth of the distinction, and that is also the stylistic significance of the expression. What now of its rhetorical application to the whole final conception of Death as sad ? It founds upon the essential *passivity*, expressed in the words "deep" and "holy." Death knows no casual victims, and grieves with no petulant grief, since she is no arbitrary instrument, but the fulfilling of a fatality, which being necessary must for that very reason be just, and not to be made the occasion of sickly grief,—and being just, must be laden with some reversionary hope. Still that hope, being yet in reversion, is not to be saluted with boisterous anticipation. The figure of Death is still turned toward us, as an experience that must be faced ; though its illumination is from beyond. But since its significance, if understood in its intense passivity, is not more that of a universal than that of a mediate necessity, the *indirect* suggestion of the one by the other is infinitely more subtle and pregnant, than if the figure had been turned round amid the blare of anthems and the blaze of resurrection.

## 9.

Besides the indirect significance which any passage may bear, there is for every passage an indirect literary effect, superadded

to its immediate stylistic effect. This superadded effect is also rhetorical, as contradistinguished from the stylistic.

The two canons according to which literary effect is most rapidly determined are these two—force and artistic beauty. There is no effective passage, of which we cannot say it is either forcible or beautiful. But obviously every passage that is forcible is also to a certain extent beautiful, and *vice versa*. That a man does not generally admire the way in which he has been knocked down, does not disprove this; his irritation may interfere to prevent it. But that in a single instance he has so far abstracted from his personal feeling as to admire a telling blow of that kind, is a complete proof that the exhibition of modulated power has of itself a reflex æsthetic value. So also the mere view of a fragile object, a petal, or a piece of porcelain, conveys *pro tanto* a sense of power. Even verbally they may be shown to have a certain identity. By “effect,” in common phrase, we mean, on the one hand, palpable result; and a thing is effective just in proportion as it produces such a result. But a thing done “for effect,” on the other hand, expresses the last definite purpose assignable for any exertion whatever—the sublation of all ordinary purpose—viz. an æsthetic purpose. The phrase has become partly one of contempt. But it is legitimate, seeing that the æsthetic purpose is itself a teleologic purpose, and the teleologic value in that case is exactly proportioned to the æsthetic result. It is the same with literary effect:—

How sweet is thy love, O my sister, my betrothed !

How sweet is thy love above wine !

And the fragrance of thy perfumes above all the spices !

Thy lips, O my betrothed, distil honey ;

Honey and milk are under thy tongue,

And the odour of thy garments is as the smell of Lebanon.  
 A closed garden art thou, my sister, my betrothed,  
*A closed garden, a sealed fountain.*  
 Thy shoots like a garden of pomegranates,  
 With precious fruits,  
 Cypresses and nards,  
 Nard and crocus,  
 Calamus and cinnamon,  
 With all sorts of frankincense trees,  
 Myrrh and aloes ;  
 With all kinds of excellent aromatics,  
 With a garden-fountain,  
 A well of living waters,  
 And streams flowing from Lebanon.  
 Arise, O north wind ! and come, thou south !  
 Blow upon my garden,  
 That its perfumes may flow out !

There is no immediate force of expression here ; nevertheless it produces for us not merely a sense of power in the artist, but a sense of force that is not in spite of, but directly proportioned to, the beauty in the expression. And so conversely :—

The mouth is amply developed. Brutalities unspeakable sit upon the upper lip, which is confluent with a snout ; for separate nostrils there are none. But the lower lip, which is drawn inwards with the curve of a marine shell—oh, what a convolute of cruelty and revenge is *there* ! Cruelty !—to whom ? Revenge !—for what ? Pause not to ask ; but look upwards to other mysteries. In the very region of his temples, driving itself downwards into his cruel brain, and breaking the continuity of his diadem, is a horrid chasm, a ravine, a shaft, that many centuries would not traverse ; and it is serrated on its posterior wall with a harrow that is partly hidden. From the anterior wall of this chasm rise, in vertical directions, two processes ; one perpendicular, and rigid as a horn, the other streaming forward before some portentous breath.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Description of the Nebula in Orion* : by De Quincey.

Not an image of beauty is here ; yet extrinsically, and because of its essential force, a reflex æsthetic sense is produced. And but for its force this effect would not be given. Directly it excludes beauty just as much as weakness. But that which in itself excludes beauty becomes thus the mediator of it in relation to expressions which seemed calculated to express the reverse, viz. repulsiveness. The indirect effect in both these cases is rhetorical, that is to say, it is not distinctively the same for either, but alternatively. It may be difficult at times to say which is the immediate effect, and which the derived, since they meet in every passage. But the same causes which operate to make the relation dual, and, therefore, on occasion, equivocal, necessarily operate as a ground for distinguishing which is the derived, and which the immediate, whether beauty or force.

COR.—The rhetorical principle holds true in the converse case, that whatever is generally inartistic is to that extent weak, and whatever is weak is inartistic. But whether negatively, or positively, the rhetorical possibilities of effect, as well as those of stylic effect on which they found, rest ultimately on the possibilities of the formation and aggregation, the differentiating and the grouping of individual expressions, in their simple ultimate relations of Quality and Quantity. Of these the primary relation is that of Quality.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF QUALITY.

#### *Section I. The Conditions of Quality.*

##### 10.

THE universal criterion for style, first and last, is effect. If a man calls you a fool, he produces a result, because of some issue or principle suggested, and connecting itself with some sentiment—of chagrin or astonishment, of pain or resentment, etc. Now the inevitable co-factor in all such cases is novelty. The proposition advanced need not be substantially new; it may be identically a repetition of an old charge or statement. But that mere quantitative or numerical difference is sufficient to create a sensation of novelty. It is not that you have not been told so before; but it is that you are now told so by a different person. Or perhaps it is not even that; but it is that you are now told it by the same person a second time. That of itself stimulates the attention, apart from the stimulus otherwise lent by the fact that something was to be said, which you expected to be something new. And the faculties of reproduction are known implicitly to be so weak, that your informant trusts either to your having forgotten it, or else you politely bear with it, trusting that he has forgotten having said it. And if not, you revolt. You did not come there, you say, to learn that, or you did not pay to hear that, etc.

And supposing what you are told to be something like this, that six and five make eleven, you rebel, because an effect is produced which you cannot get rid of, and which is produced, just because the statement which occasions it is not novel. That being your desideratum, perhaps even your *sine qua non*, the result is not immediately, because the statement is commonplace, but mediately, because it is not original.

In so far as logic is the immediate science of truth, it supplies any essential virtue that might be found to belong to an art like style in expounding truth. What style receives for itself is only a certain percentage of commission for making the truth tell. The amount of its profits, however, is determined, not merely by the degree of its success, but by the amount of truth which it communicates. This is the second and implicit condition of style, just as logic, after its own fashion, acknowledges the condition of originality. There is no need, it is felt there, of illustrating the multiplication-table; all that must be left to the illuminator, or embosser on new patterns. And even in testing a proposition accepted as true, the tester is virtually assuming that it is not known to be true. When attested, therefore, it is *pro tanto* original; truth becoming thus a synthetic idea. And conversely, originality, instead of meaning simply that which is not known, comes to mean that which is not known to be true.

COR.—The absolute criterion of all suggestion is truth; novelty is only relative. But, as it happens, style deals distinctively with the relative, leaving logic to deal with the absolute. It is to be distinctly observed, however, that the relativity of truth ascribed to style *is* that of novelty, not of particularity. A statement, according to literary modes of dealing,

is relatively true for a man for whom it was not true before, not as being true for him, because false for some one else. The purpose of style is not simply to defend or aggrandise a foregone conclusion in any man's mind, dividing the world on any particular question into two factions, those who believe the one phase, and those who believe the other. The division which it makes is of all men into two sections, those who know a truth, and those who know it not (a much more universal division than the other, since that upon most questions leaves a third space open and indifferent), or, it may be, those who know it adequately, and those who know it inadequately. For as soon as a truth is announced, and to some extent recognised, there is a call to intensify the impression at the moment, and make the truth better known—known more clearly, more forcibly, more captivatingly. If the idea is apprehended as yet only in figure, explicate it literally; if it is scientifically obscure, bring it through figure into a clearer apprehension. Have the data become stale?—let them be vivified by historical illustration; or superannuated?—let them be supplemented by later researches, so as to equate the interest of the listener, on the one hand, with their importance, and on the other, with their fertility. The result in this case is not, as in the first, where the gain to one side is a dead loss to the other, but always a positive advantage; and, for the individual, of knowledge experimental instead of visionary, and of knowledge coherent instead of confused and partial.

## 11.

All effect, depending ultimately on the conditions of novelty and truth, is produced mediately through the terms of separate propositions, through the mutual relations of subject and pre-



dicate. This is what constitutes Quality in style generally ; in which *it is identical as to its basis with Quantity in logic.*

The quality of a thought is that which makes it to differ from other thoughts, to be that which distinctively it is. In logic, all this descends upon the copula ; and the differentiation there is of the simplest ; for no matter in what way the subject and predicate behave, the question revolves upon us : Is it, or is it not so ? With a different criterion, the differentiation of style is more complex ; it allows of various kinds and degrees of effect, where logic allows of none. And hence the fact that the onus of the differentiation settles upon the subject and predicate. In logic, novelty being satisfied (*i.e.* postulated), the question of truth devolves upon the copula. Which implicit canon of observance being settled for style, the explicit stylistic condition is fulfilled in the subject and predicate. It would be spurious to insist upon the distinction between truth and novelty, as if the first were related specially to the subject, and the latter to the predicate. It is to a certain extent true, that, since the predicate comes last, the attention apprehends the novelty of the conception, only when the final term is distinctly rapped out, and its truth, only when it travels back upon the subject, to compare the one with the other. In fact neither term acts without the other. And as logic claims the copula, *in* which its results are determined, *through* the subject and predicate, so style lays claim to the latter, *in* which its results are determined *through* the copula. And this happens not in spite of, but because of the fact, that the terms and the copula are capable of reciprocal variation (by permutation, etc.). Also it happens not in spite of, but expressly because of the fact,

that each science is governed fundamentally by the same laws.

COR.—Quality in the scientific sense is obviously to be discriminated from any thoughtless figurative use of the term applied to what are certain *properties* of style (loosely called qualities) or quasi-rhetorical criteria (§ 9, p. 77), founding upon this one elementary and homogeneous fact of quality. It would evidently be a very coarse and a very gratuitous confusion, to place such properties of style as Force and Beauty in the same category with the *elements* of style, such, for example, as sublimity. (1.) These properties form a distinct set of criteria, applicable to any passage, superadded to the criteria which determine its effect as regulated by the amount of sentiment. And to place both under a common category is, therefore, the same thing as to classify together wool, platinum, hardness and flexibility. Metaphor and other elements are quite overlooked in this process, which have equal right to go into the category of so-called qualities with sublimity. And the gist of their exclusion is, that as elements they are left to be qualified by the properties including sublimity; which means precisely that tin and copper, etc., are qualified in respect of certain attributes, such as hardness, flexibility—and iron! (2.) While the properties of style involve each other reciprocally (§ 9), the elements of style do not; they are either indifferent, as in metaphor and sublimity, or else mutually exclusive, as in sublimity and humour. (3.) The properties of style are to be found in *every* thought; the elements are only occasional, *i.e.* variable merely and alternative. *Every* thought is more or less clear, more or less beautiful, more or less forcible; the properties come directly into question in regard to every expression, and in their totality.

Some element of expression must, of course, be in every thought, but each, as it were, only in rotation.

## 12.

The principle by which a term is divided, according as it signifies certain attributes, or the number of objects to which these may be extended, is known under some name or other to all readers. It might be supposed that for style, if any change of nomenclature were required, it would be sufficient to introduce some phrase which might express the essentially compound nature of the connotation in its terms. That, in fact, is not the case, but the reverse; since the very relation which calls attention to the connotation of attributes in a compound, calls attention to the fact that each complex term is divisible into attributes numerically separate. Accordingly, by the *inclusion* of a term is meant, in relation to style, the aggregation of a certain number of attributes, and by its *implication*, its comprehension of a certain congeries of individuals. The implication of "thing," for example, is universal; since it covers all objects indifferently, and, without a hint of the brilliance and mass of whatsoever attributes they may include, itself most meagre in respect of that inclusion which it vilipends in other terms. This is borne out in a somewhat paradoxical way. When a boarding-school young lady does not dare to be directly and maliciously impudent, or is too excited or too refined to express herself with vehemence, she calls her friend and enemy a "thing;" where the very absence of all positive inclusion is the ground of the derived significance. The individual is denuded of all that constitutes individuality in the sense affecting her—is reduced to the individuality which distinguishes one farthing

from another. And the term is applied with most effect to a person, since from a person there is most to take away. This is the opposite case, viz., depth of inclusion. For, agreeably to the dual meaning of the term, individuality, which, on the one side, signifies abstract identity, an identity which one other individual is sufficient to expound, signifies also a concrete identity, which it may take an infinite variety of others to expound.

The more common and superficial relations of description and distribution (as opposed to definition and division) are essentially stylistic in their adaptation. Description, for example, by way of simile—*e.g.* a stammerer being described, as one who had swallowed the alphabet without chewing it, and in revenge had to go through the process of mastication when needing to use it—is highly in the manner of style. To call a man “both knave and fool” is quite allowable, as a matter of description. But a very comical mode of description is to counterfeit the technical machinery of division, as in saying that a man is “*half* knave and half fool,” the man being indivisible in that sense, and indescribable, therefore, if he were so divided.

COR.—Quality as such in style has a definite meaning, in so far as it is to be distinguished from a possible quantity; and a technical meaning, in so far as it is to be contradistinguished from logical quality. A second meaning which may be attached to it is the metaphysical. And accordingly, I draw attention, for the moment, to the fact of the internal relations of propositions generally, thus:—

<i>Quantity.</i>	<i>Quality.</i>	<i>Mode.</i>
All	Men	(are) Hypocrites.

Thirdly, however, it happens that, in common phrase, the

relations, which here are seen to commingle, may be spoken of as convertible with each other. Accordingly, if I proclaim the fact that all men are hypocrites, I shall receive the next day anonymous letters, requesting, indifferently as regards the expression (though peremptorily enough, in all likelihood, as regards the intention), that the statement shall be "qualified," or "modified." "Quantified," as being a trifle too scientific and, therefore, too calm for an anonymous letter, would not be used. Nevertheless, either of the three terms may be applied to any of the specific functions of the proposition. And as "modify," which means first of all to accentuate, or be the cause of the accentuation of any specific difference in an object, comes to signify a *variation* of the present state of the object, so "quantify" comes to signify a variation in the numerical relations or possibilities of any term. The predicate, therefore, which strictly is modal, may also be quantified. Only it is a variation of its *inclusion* which takes place, not of its implication; the distinction of the altered term being, not that it is specifically connected with this or that subject, to the exclusion of other subjects, but that it is connected with this or that subject to the exclusion of other predicates. Its value is determined accordingly either by way of its being preferred to other predicates generally, or differentially, by way of its being preferred to such as from their resistance are hard to supersede. That being understood, it does not matter how I amend my statement, whether by quantifying, qualifying, or modifying. Only that most appropriately (according to the scheme already given), when I am asked to retract my paradox, I quantify it, by saying "*some* men are hypocrites;" being pressed still farther, I qualify it, by saying "*some wicked* men are hypocrites," and finally,

being pressed into something like the truth, modify it, by acknowledging in desperation, that "some wicked men are *occasionally* hypocrites." With regard to which it may be noticed (1) that the critical term in every proposition is the middle term, the qualitative, which preserves an equivocal relation to the others, changing what is ushered into it from quantity in the shape of implication, into the shape of inclusion when that is transferred to mode. (2) The ratios of variation are the same, both for implication and inclusion, in so far as both vary numerically. Thus an "all" is always greater than a "some." (3) The subject and predicate expound and modify each other, and that directly, through the common relations of implication and inclusion. A diminution of the implication of the subject is followed by an expansion of the inclusion of the predicate, and conversely. Also a diminution of the implication or inclusion of the subject is accompanied by a corresponding diminution in the implication or inclusion of the predicate; and similarly in regard to its expansion. But while the process of variation may be expounded numerically, the immediate ground of the variation is essentially one of quality. The union of two attributes is not simply one of numerical increment, but one of combination. "Quaint," for example, which, abstractly considered, is the synthesis of *two* conceptions, to wit peculiarity, with an element of simplicity, is really qualitative, in so far as one of these attributes, at least, is complex, and itself *a fortiori* is a unity of complex meaning. The general principles, according to which the variation of quality is determined, are Subtlety and Comprehensiveness.

*Section II. Of Subtlety.*

## 13.

Every truth that is determined negatively, *i.e.* by way of resistance to, or essential variation upon some antecedent conception, falls, like every truth that is simply positive, under one of three categories : it is either an All, a Some, or a None. And it does so, by way of contradistinction to some one of the correlative formulæ. The disaffection is organic ; each form being complementary to the rest, not simply as a positive resource for meeting a specific emergency, but negatively, as an exponent of the value and significance of the form against which for the time being it is measured. Accordingly the form of every proposition may be explicated thus, the thesis representing the fallacious version, and the antithesis the amended version :—

<i>Thesis.</i>			<i>Antithesis.</i>
No	P is Q.	( <i>Univ.</i> )	All P is Q.
No	P is Q.	( <i>Part.</i> )	Some P is Q.
All	P is Q.	( <i>Sing.</i> )	Some P is Q.

and conversely :—

<i>Thesis.</i>			<i>Antithesis.</i>
All	P is Q.	( <i>Univ.</i> )	No P is Q.
Some	P is Q.	( <i>Part.</i> )	No P is Q.
Some	P is Q.	( <i>Sing.</i> )	All P is Q.

The implication of the terms is thus expanded, in the first section of the scheme, and restricted in the second. Accordingly, a *restrictive universal* is formed by reducing an all to a none, and an *expansive universal*, by extending a none to an all ; and the particular is restricted and expanded correspondingly. In the case of singular propositions, however, the reverse takes place. To reduce an all to a some is to expand

the force of what is thus restricted, and to raise the appreciable value of the term as singular—as sole and peculiar. And so to reduce the force of a singular proposition is not to reduce it to a blank negation, but to make it indistinguishable and general, by expanding the some to an all. Any fallacy *there* consists in equating all P with Q, when what should have been equated with Q was simply some portion or function of P, viz. p. But now, let P be measured against other terms, as being itself the singular equivalent for the predicate Q; and the fallacy will consist in equating the generic term, say S, with Q, to the obscuring of P. P is here a portion of S; and, by substituting S for P, you neutralise the specific value of P. But by substituting S, you have altered the *inclusion* of the term: so long as the talk was of P simply, there was only change of implication; but now that you have brought in S, and expanded the implication (from  $P = \text{some } S$ , to all S) you have restricted the inclusion. Hitherto, I had held that only those refined-men-who-were-easily-provoked were backbiters, but you disabuse me of that belief, by insisting that all refined men, more or less, are backbiters. But now, upon this suggestion of a variation in the inclusion of a term, follows another change. You tell me, for example, that “all language is progressive, save in very rude and early periods,” and I am startled by the proposition, having been accustomed to regard language as then most aggressive, when much remained to be discovered in the way of new ideas, and most stationary, when literature had developed, and made men everywhere conversant with the whole complement of ideas. But the form, under which the new conception presents itself to me is this, surprise that *anything* in language should be associated with progression—in the technical for-



mula, that any P should be Q. By and by, I may realise the fact, that all language is progressive, by pitting that proposition (all P is Q) against the other (some P is Q), and so, mediately, pitting it against the original one, no P is Q. The distinction, in regard to this form of proposition, is that it eliminates the negative universal of the first schema, and substitutes, under a different valuation, what was the singular form as its particular, having provided itself with a new singular, determined, not internally and by preserving the same term (P), but externally, and by repudiating a new generic form, S, thus:—

<i>Thesis.</i>		<i>Antithesis.</i>
Some P is Q.	(Univ.)	All P is Q.
No P is Q.	(Part.)	Some P is Q.
All S is Q.	(Sing.)	Only P is Q.

and negatively:—

<i>Thesis.</i>		<i>Antithesis.</i>
All P is Q.	(Univ.)	Some P is Q.
Some P is Q.	(Part.)	No P is Q.
Only P is Q.	(Sing.)	All S is Q.

Evidently, therefore, in the positive part of the schema, the universal antithesis is formed upon the thesis, by expanding the implication, the particular, by expanding the inclusion, and the singular, by restricting the implication. And in the privative section, the universal antithesis is formed, by restricting the implication, the particular, by restricting the inclusion, and the singular, by expanding the implication.

Now subtlety, in general, consists precisely (with the help of surprise) in the legitimate variation of one or other of these formulæ to its antithetic formula; and always by means of the *inclusion* of the proposition. For any variation in a proposition, whether real or fancied, depends upon some variation, real or spurious, in its inclusion. Its terms need not

vary verbally ; but they must substantially, so that the variation shall be reciprocally expounded by each. If a man tells me that the dogma of Papal Infallibility is a regulative and practical, as opposed to a constitutive and essential doctrine, he expands for me the permanent inclusion of the dogma, on that side at least. But, at the same moment, he has added to the implication of the term "regulative," as extended to this very dogma. Accordingly, in this instance, in which it is the inclusion of the subject that is expanded, the variation is advertised by a corresponding expansion in the implication of the predicate. Here, however, appears what might be a blank contradiction to the principle of variation (as expressed on p. 88), affecting the inverse movement of expansion and implication in subject and predicate. The rationale, nevertheless, is clear: "any" and "none" cannot be measured the one against the other, as if they stood to each other as genus and species, or *vice versa* ; they are contraries, and not partial coincidents. But the moment it is a question of reciprocal variation of terms, where they may be compared as genus to species, or species to genus, the principle of inversion takes effect ; as in fact it does here with regard to the other forms of variation in propositions. The subject and predicate vary reciprocally thus (the particular proposition being here made to usurp the position of the universal) in the positive scheme :—

*The Particular* (some P, as against no P) expands the inclusion of the subject, and the implication of the predicate.

*The Universal* (all P, as against some P) restricts the inclusion of the subject, and expands the implication of the predicate.

*The Singular* (only P, as against all S) expands the inclusion of the subject, and restricts the implication of the predicate.

In the negative:—

*The Particular* (no P, as against some P) restricts the inclusion of the subject, and the implication of the predicate.

*The Universal* (some P, as against all P) expands the inclusion of the subject, and restricts the implication of the predicate.

*The Singular* (all S, as against P simply) restricts the inclusion of the subject, and expands the implication of the predicate.

So far, however, there is nothing to discriminate what is subtle from what is novel. You tell us that your brother has joined a secret society. The terms certainly expound each other; but there is no subtlety in your statement, and if there could be, it would be in the fact, not in *you*. And were it not that the subtlety would be in *us*, for suggesting it, we should advise you to go and look your brother well round, and see if he is not immensely corpulent, and then come and tell us that he had gained admission to the society through the keyhole. For in some such fashion must you strike the manner of subtlety, *i.e.* in a proposition, whose terms do not appear immediately to reciprocate, as to their *differential* restriction and expansion. It will astonish people to hear that corpulence should include anything like getting through a keyhole, and that getting through a keyhole should implicate anything in the shape of corpulence.

Any variation of a truth that is logically coherent must itself be definite. Only, in logic, it is quite enough, if the

alteration rests with the antithesis, and simply says that the thesis is *not* what it was asserted to be. But this is not sufficient, according to style. There it is indispensable to assign the counter-position, to say *what* a thing is or is not, and *how much* of it. And thus it happens, that many a writer, bent simply on the exposition of his subject, and concerning himself not in the least about his logic, or about the possible objections he may be meeting, is reversing whole trains of thought in the minds of his readers, without being aware that he is overriding theories of which he has never heard, and without even being reminded that he is colliding with theories which he knows very well. It is a commonplace fact, that a man may write well, and may reason well, without knowing how he does it. But the real point of such a fact is this, that he should write well, without knowing that he is effecting a good deal by his involved reasoning. After a similar fashion, it happens, that the perception of a subtle effect on the part of the reader, as well as of the writer, while it is always positive, and matches a definite antecedent, does not necessarily involve the formulating of the antagonist position from which it is a rebound. At the same time, a process of rapid mediation does go on in the adjusting of subtle effects—which forms a distinctive mode of syllogising. To speak of re-entrant angles as “tedious,” for example, is subtle. What we bargained for in the inclusion of the re-entrant angle was its *intricacy*, which we find quite safe, *plus* the idea of wearisomeness, with a trifle of carriage to pay for the additional hint. Our knowledge of the first has been employed to mediate the conception of the second. Accordingly, this is the rationale of the stylistic syllogism:—

Re-entrant angles are tedious.

Since—? They are intricate.

And forsooth—? All that is intricate is tedious.

And correspondingly in the negative case. The progress is from the singular, through the particular, to the universal; and consists rigorously in making explicit what in the subject was implicit.

COR.—The second and third formulæ in both branches of the scheme, as finally explicated, admit each of a twofold mode of phrasing. For example, all P, as against some P, may be read, either as restricting the inclusion of the subject, and expanding the implication of the predicate, or else as expanding the implication of the former, and restricting the inclusion of the latter. But secondly, the universal in the first section, and the singular in the second, are identical as to phrasing, in either of these relations; and correspondingly, the singular of the first section is identical in form with the universal in the second. Accordingly, the formulæ reduce themselves to four. But thirdly, the remaining universal and singular are really functions of the particular, the one in the positive, the other in the negative relation. For, having been accustomed to think, good soul, that some S (viz. P) was Q, I am naturally surprised to learn that “*any* S may be Q,” as, for example, X & Y. Or conversely, having been used to associate X & Y with Q, among other members of S, I am horrified to discover that, P only being Q, they are now *disimplicated* in relation to Q, *i.e.* that “any S is not Q.” The variation, therefore, in either case (negative or positive), being a differential variation, and since the universal and singular may each be expressed in terms of the implication of the predicate, and the inclusion of the subject, the generic or representative formula for subtlety in a proposition is this:

*that it turns upon the differential inclusion of the subject, as expounded by the differential implication of the predicate.*

## 14.

Subtlety may appear in three forms, in a proposition, in a term (which is a condensed form of the proposition), or in the link between two propositions (which is an expanded form of the proposition). Now the terms and the propositions have this in common, that each is concerned either with a fact, a principle, or an analogy. In regard to the term, for example, we have the word "fool," to express a fact, "doltish," to express the principle or tendency, and "donkey," to express the analogy. And in the proposition, after its own method, we express the fact, by saying that such and such a man is a fool, or doltish, or a donkey; the principle, by saying that all people who sit long with damp feet are fools, doltish, etc.; and the analogue, by saying that such and such a person looked like a donkey—which is precisely the distinction between metaphor and simile, the one belonging to the term, the other to the proposition.

1. In the realm of Fact; and according to the principle of Attention. (1) There is the order of cases, in which the mind simply reproduces individual phenomena, with no activity beyond what is needed to make these significant. Thus (*a*) in the relation of the universal, the expression, applied to the bee, of "velvet"—because, being in the first place recondite (*i.e.* not such as most men would explicate to themselves), it applies to all bees, and so enhances differentially the perception of the individual who does explicate the idea, seeing that other people, from the very commonness of the fact, have just as much opportunity for

explicating it as he. (b) In the region of the particular, the expression,

*Grape-green* all the waves are,

is subtle, just for the converse reason, viz. that the effect thus painted is comparatively rare, and, therefore, evasive. All waves are not green, nor all green waves grape-green.

(c) In the relation of the singular :—

Yonder bee anon

Muffles low hum in some campanula

Of nectared amethyst, *and hums again.*

That applies only to the bee. The noise of a blue-bottle, gratuitously hushed on a window-pane, is a very different thing. This has all the effect of accident, with all the sanction of necessity. (2) Subtlety in the reproduction of fact arises from the *activity* of the mind in relation to the phenomena, so as to produce a result that is true, but hypostatised. (a) By way of negatively hypostatising the collateral facts, *e.g.* to speak of the sea-beach as

Kissed by wavelets *by winds forsaken.*

(b) By way of abstracting from the real totality of the facts, *e.g.*

Green lizards glance among the sunbaked stones,

Or rest at gaze with shoulder on the stone

*And half their shadow,*

where there is a very quiet oblivion of the other, and, as the poet perhaps whispers maliciously to himself, the better half. (c) By way of integrating the conception to something more than it appears. Thus a writer describes the ox :—

Audibly ruminating, *couch'd at ease*

*Upon his shadow, in a luminous moon.*

The idea naturally attached to shadow is that obscuration which may be seen—which demands some space intermediate between the object and the surface on which the shade is projected. So that what the animal seems to lie upon is precisely *not* its shadow. Now the poet has a perfect sanction, from the natural science point of view, to speak as he does. Only, and quite apart from that, he produces artistically an effect appreciable by all in extending the ground-shadow, so as to make it bounded on either side by light, and not on the one side by light, and on the other by the shade on the animal—in extending the unilluminated space from what we see to what (though it exists) we do not and never shall see. (3) Subtlety in the portraiture of fact may show itself in realising to the reflection truth that is actual and complex. (a) In the selection of an accidental relation or complexity:—

From the sails the dew did drip—  
Till clomb above the eastern bar  
The hornèd moon, *with one bright star*  
*Within the nether tip.*

There is such a thing in what is casual as profound verisimilitude, for it is just the fortuitous which is the constant in all natural phenomena. (b) In the portrayal of a reflex agency:—

Those angel forms—  
Such blush their grain of pinion warms  
*As in a milk-white lily glows,*  
*Leaned over by a lovelit rose;*

and (c) in the expression of relief, as here:—

And then away the toddler flew  
To bury her wee face where covert grew  
Of marestail and of fern, *a forest small*  
*Within the forest, taller than them all.*



2. In the realm of Principle, and according to the canon of Reason. By principle, I mean relation substantial and philosophic ; whose various orders are embraced within the following schema :—

*Relation.*  
 Origination.  
 Mediation.  
 Resultance.

*Disrelation.*  
 Transcendence.  
 Adversation.  
 Approximation.

*Correlation.*  
 Community.  
 Reciprocity.  
 Convertibility.

Subtlety of mediation, which is the central conception of the first group, may be illustrated from the syllogism, which is expressly the formulating of a conclusion regarding one proposition, through the medium of another. This paragraph affords a fine example of subtlety (under the category of origin), in discerning the secret source and motive of a certain symbolic treatment :—"It has been said that the fawn belongs to Apollo and Diana, because stags are sensitive to music. But I have myself no doubt, that in this particular relation to the gods of morning, it always stands as the symbol of wavering and glancing motion on the ground, as well as of the light and shadow through the leaves, chequering the ground as the fawn is dappled."<sup>1</sup> Here the commonplace explanation, relying upon a principle that is sometimes subtler than that of the eye, but which in this case is too remote and visionary, is easily overthrown by a reference drawn from the more obvious sense. And in fact, an absolute proof, unique in character and in dignity, is given of the truth of the latter rendering,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ruskin.

by an expression in a poem<sup>1</sup> published a short time previously :—

“And as they leave her in the rain,  
 A milk-white doe she often fed  
 Through the dim forest limps in pain  
 To lean its head  
 Upon the harsh grave-wall and die.  
 More sweet to it than dells of green,  
 Where mate and fawn *sun-dappled* lie,  
 Thy grave, Kathleen !”

The effect of transcendence (in the second group of categories) is always produced by a result that has apparently broken loose from its mediation, and whose factors it requires a little reflection to rally. Thus :—“If a luminous body were to be struck out of existence twelve millions of miles away, an observer would still see it for a minute after its extinction.” And, in mathematics, the principle of approximation is perfectly exemplified in the asymptote of a curve, which obviously holds the relations of transcendence and adversation resolved in itself.

In the relations of the circle and the ellipse (under the general category of correlativity), we have a subtle illustration of the principle of community. There the coincidence—the describing of equal areas by the radius vector in equal times—is expounded by the differences—the equidistance from the centre, in the one case, as against the varying distance in the other, and the uniform velocity of the one moving body, as against the varying velocity of the other. A frequent way for the principle of reciprocity to manifest itself is under these three forms, (1) of positive correspondence, (2) of negative, and (3) of inverse correspondence ;

<sup>1</sup> “Kathleen,” in “Beatrice, and other Poems,” by the Hon. Roden Noel.

which may be illustrated from one example. In the first instance, it may be said that the more a people abhors crime, the more it punishes it. But in the second instance, the fact arises to neutralise that, viz. that the mitigation of punishment "does not result from a laxer, but an exacter estimate of law and justice. It is *because* the many so correctly regard the law, that we can afford to punish less the few who err." And hence, thirdly, "that is the circumstance that explains the apparent paradox, the more a people abhors crime, the less it punishes it,"—the readiness to punish, and the necessity to punish, moving inversely as each other. A certain form of dialectic will exemplify the principle of conversion. It is easy to construct such examples. Thus we may say, it is a universal rule, that there is no rule without exception; obviously, therefore, *one* rule must be excepted, as having no exception, and as being itself the exception to the general rule; which rule, however, is just the universal rule first named (it being the rule which has no exception), viz. that there is no rule without exception. It excepts itself in the very moment of expressing itself, *i.e.* is at once the rule and the exception, alternately and *convertibly* either.

3. In the realm of Analogy, and according to the canon of Fancy. (1) Subtlety underlies the differential completeness of the coincidence between type and thing typified, *e.g.*

There is beauty in the long-ribb'd hills, in the valley soft and green,  
In the trees that stand like sages with their shadow all between,

expressing first, the towering dignity and inevitable calm beneficence of great minds; next, the extent of their individual overshadowing influence; and finally, the continuity

in the influence of each—it is “shadow,” not shadows—interblending with that of his neighbour. (2) There is an order of effects, whose subtlety consists in the partial coincidence of the symbol with what is symbolised, and where the points of non-coincidence are hinted:—

A wild bee in a dim chapelle,  
 Hovering near a flower-bell,  
 With a drowsy murmur droning,  
 Imitates a priest intoning,  
 With his lowly eyes intent  
 Upon the Holy Sacrament.

The salient points of resemblance are these: first, in regard to the sound, as being subdued and continuous; secondly, in regard to the solitariness of the sound, it being the only voice heard amid the surrounding and expectant silence; thirdly, in regard to the sound as prelusive to the feast, and ceasing with it. Again, the points of contrast are, first, the suggestion of a festive and secular purpose, as compared with the devotional; secondly, the suggestion of isolation and self-ministry, as compared with the distributive office of the priest; and thirdly, the fact, that with the bee the feast which the sound preludes is merely one of many rapidly succeeding each other, one that ceases, expressly to be renewed, while in the other case, it is only occasional, and ceases, expressly that its influence may be diffused along the intervals. (3) There is the case in which subtlety of effect arises from the utter antagonism between the symbol and the substantial idea which is typified.

As two spent swimmers that do cling together  
 And choke their art.—

What do we gain from that expression? Why, that two friendly parties have inopportunately leagued themselves

together, to their mutual disadvantage. Now, in fact, it is the reverse that is meant: the expression is used of enemies in battle. Nor is this a case like the last, where the image is divided within itself, and suggests collateral contrast; the simile takes off at the very root of the coincidence; as may easily be proved, for discard it from its connection with foes in conflict, and immediately it finds a perfect antitype in the idea of friends in distress "leagued together," etc., while if you divorce the other image, with all its train of coincidences and non-coincidences, what antitype will you find to suit it?

COR.—The degree of subtlety varies according to different principles. A very complex effect, of course, is produced by a subtle combination of propositions, each in itself subtle, and with an involution of subtlety in the phrasing. The effect, again, may arise from the aggregation of suggestions in one image, thus:—

Still flames of window, long and thin,

descriptive of the stained glass window-divisions in a cathedral—"long and thin," to call up the stripling look of such divisions, "flames," to call up their pointed form, quite as much as the glow of colour, and "still," partly to indicate the sanctuary peace, and partly to impose a significant limitation on the "flames." That last effect is, therefore, a complex one. Again, a subtle principle may be superadded to an image already subtle from its completeness, as in the expression, used in speaking of a futile effort, that it is "an attempt to paw the horizon." The conception is of infinite force, not only on account of the physical impossibility (since the horizon recedes just as the animal approaches), but metaphysically, because "horizon" is virtually an abstraction, and to speak of

pawing it, therefore, pretty much as if one should speak of being first cousin to the equator, or having a pair of trousers measured for the ecliptic. A conspicuous order of subtlety, too, is that where the reflex or complex principle is enhanced by the delicacy of the form or material :—

Eyelash so frail, inlay with trail  
*Of shade* her eyes, a maze of sweetness !  
 My soul sinks through their dimlit blue  
 To find in them her own completeness—

as if each eyelash left its separate impress of shade, and (as the “trail” hints) were fringed off in the shading.

### 15.

Every subtle truth is essentially paradoxical, *i.e.* it bears, on its first consideration, a different value from that which it bears on reflection. It is, at least, abrupt, and possibly subversive of some existing conception. Occasionally it divides mankind into two classes, those to whom the suggestion is startling, and those to whom it is contradictory. Possibly it ranges all under the latter category, as did the discovery of the earth’s motion round the sun. That was a total contradiction of everybody’s experience. Not, however, an absolute : the senses were not affronted, as if they had been told that there was no motion in the circumstances at all. For manifestly, if the earth did revolve—not sidle, but turn upon its axis—round the sun, the very same phenomenon would be produced ; the one hypothesis, for the reflecting mind, was just as consonant with the facts as the other, and by much the more exciting. The popular mind, and the mind educated up to a certain point, are often alike inconsistent in this respect ; at one time believing statements just on account of their paradox, and at another, disbelieving them for their

paradox. The educated person repudiates the popular idea, that a man may be lighter just after his dinner than he was before it; but in the same moment he revolts from the not very unobvious truth, that any two pure abstractions (such as Being and Non-Being) are identical, as a lie, or if not, a snare, and if not a snare, a joke. These inconsistencies, nevertheless, go according to a principle, which it would not be difficult to frame, so as to anticipate and neutralise the essentially vulgar and discreditable kind of testimony, in regard to certain questions, which is derived from majorities. Meantime, the more commonplace the mind, the less does it value pure originality, and the more, confounding what is merely fresh with what is original, does it tend to undervalue the latter by comparison. For *imaginative* synthesis the populace has no sympathy whatever, and for dialectical truth in particular, as much adaptation as a cow has for getting through a turnstile.

A man cannot be said to have subtlety for his differentia in style, unless he is equal to a sustained originality in thinking. Everybody says something subtle now and again: the dice must occasionally turn out as if the experts had loaded them. And the modes of thus reaching subtle truth are just the modes of the expert, only they are not employed so continuously, or upon the same fields. Subtlety is never more transcendental than *reflection*; and a truth *is* only subtle for those who can fully apprehend it. It would be inaccurate, therefore, to speak of a thing unintelligible, as absolutely subtle; much rather a suggestion is absolutely subtle, which is perfectly intelligible, and a truth not quite intelligible is only relatively subtle, because it can be valued only indirectly. By reflection, therefore, it is that such effects are attained; and often through a man's

discarding his first impressions, or reverting to those which forsooth he had discarded for others which have now to be relinquished as false. Subtlety is not always a second-sight, that raises a man, as if inspired, above his fellows, but often a second sight in the coarse numerical sense. Thus an author, in speaking of a death by drawing asunder, remarks that the victim was torn "by antagonist, yet confederate forces"; where he shows the maximum of reflective power, since in "confederate" he has given the very antithesis of his primary drift; and yet he has only exhibited a power of fanciful reflection, after all.

COR.—No man is truly original who is not also subtle to his finger-ends. But no perception is really subtle, unless it is also true. And in proportion as the speculative truth in the world has been brought out by individuals, in that proportion is it indebted to subtlety. That subtlety should be regarded as necessarily equivocal, arises in part from this, that men take pleasure in certain forms of it, without thinking earnestly of its allied truth; or even charge the pleasure, attendant on the perception of the truth, to the account of the other; and so come to regard subtle suggestion as a medium of amusement, not of work—of information and reformation. Nor is this mode merely to be regarded as one of the ways of attaining certain truths: there are truths—and truth in many instances lies on the farther side of a quicksand—which cannot be attained in any other way. Of which the most natural proof is in the immediate case of subtlety itself: how should the truth on that question be attained without subtlety? It cannot possibly be attained otherwise, any more than minute atmospheric changes can be registered, except by an apparatus correspondingly delicate. Subtlety here becomes an instru-



ment as technical as the barometer; and thus the necessity for it is demonstrated, precisely in those regions where its application is most pertinent and unique. And in literature, subtlety is not applicable to anything but what is true, whether poetical or scientific. To deny the existence of the external world, therefore, by affirming it to be an affection of the senses, etc., is more offensive than the most putrid commonplace. So to speak of the sun, in poetry, as “burning without beams,” is pure nonsense, and in the spurious maudlin oriental style of expression. Contrast with that the unaffected rendering of a natural fact in the lines:—

Dimples, here and there,  
That insects *dint* with long-legged stride.

Everybody knows that what distinguishes a ripple from a wave is the twitching up of the *skin* of the water, as it were, under the wind. Now as a wave is to a ripple, so is the plash of a stone to the dimple of the water by the limb of an insect: the plunge goes beyond dinting. But to the limber touch of the fly, the surface of the water, so easily shattered by the plunge of a stone, merely undergoes a shiver or flicker; and the expression “dint” conveys precisely the momentary impression upon the impervious elastic surface of the pool. The image is subtle, is poetical, just because it is so loudly scientific in its truth. The true mode of a man’s power, who has such sensibility to natural effects, it may take a generation fully to appreciate, even for his fidelity of perception, so long as people see with their noses. But it is just this same intensity of truth, in the midst of his characteristic subtlety of insight, that has made our contemporary poet, Mr. Noel, in so extraordinary a degree, the greatest among the poetical draughtsmen and colourists of all time.

*Section III. Of Comprehensiveness.*

## 16.

In regard to any statement, no matter whether that concerns a principle or a detail, the question arises, do its subject and predicate lawfully reciprocate? The immediate relation here is one of truth. And the general form of such a question is this, does the subject as a whole include that specific complement of attributes which form the predicate, and do these apply in their completeness to everything that is implicated in the subject? If that condition is fulfilled, the proposition is comprehensive. And the formula for such a quality of thought is this: *comprehensiveness in any proposition turns upon the integral inclusion of its subject, as expounded by the integral implication of its predicate.*

If the inclusion of many terms were to be explicated, their momenta would appear to be very heterogeneous. Nevertheless, when once the relations of a term are fixed, it behaves according to one uniform principle. By which I do not mean, in the first instance, that every term, being a singular, must have each of its moments specifically fixed, as *either* universal or particular, and not as alternatively the one or the other, according to the proximate conception which for the moment regulates its internal significance. That, no doubt, is true: expressions must not veer or be bandied about in such a fashion. But it follows as a corollary from *this*, that every term has its own complement of inclusion; "curiosity," for example, having on the one side, as its universal, "desire for information," and on the other "pettiness," as its particular. Now the *vitiating* of

comprehensiveness arises from putting too fine or too blunt an edge upon the predicate of a proposition, using, *e.g.*, the proximate singular “prurience,” instead of the subordinate singular, which stands to “prurience” for a universal, *viz.* “curiosity,” and *vice versa*. An uncomprehensive thinker betrays himself immediately, even to people of not much general discernment; probably by a neglect of the singular, if his temperament is languid, and by an abuse of it, if his bias is impulsive. Wherever motive is concerned, there is all the chance in the world of a man’s abusing the singular.

COR.—The universal canon of integrity in the comprehensiveness of propositions may be variously expounded. To a certain extent, it might appear to depend on the nature of the subject treated of, whether the result were comprehensive, or the reverse. Much more, however, depends on the individual. It is better to hear a man of capacity on midges, than a noodle on the Trinity. But much depends also on the mode of writing prescribed. If you prescribe the treatment solely of details, you proscribe the very essence of a comprehensive treatment in style. Hence the second canon of *dignity*, which ordains a universal implication in the subject. Hence, too, the essential dignity of poetry, that, with the representation of a fact, it may convey a principle. This image, for example, is as purely analytic as any axiom in mathematics:—

The moonpath flecking thin and tremulous the sea,  
 where each expression tells like the explosion of a bomb.  
 The more perfect such an image, the more does it supersede  
 and disparage all other renderings of the same phenomenon.  
 The phrase, “inlaying the sea with pearl,” applied to the  
 glimmer of the moon, is artificial, in comparison, and narrow.

But this happens, because the other is so trenchant—apart from the fact, that a literal rendering of nature-phases is necessarily more forcible than a metaphorical. Hence the canon of *felicity*, which ordains that the differentia of every subject shall be given, by deepening the inclusion of the predicate. Objection may, therefore, be taken at once to all such terms as “angelic” and “fairy-like,” which are simply the most dead and ineffective of poetical mannerisms. By the side of the *finesse* that reveals itself in the expression just quoted, “fairy,” applied to anything whatsoever, is lumpish, and “angel” unspiritual. Here it is precisely that the spurious, and quasi-tautological, in analytic expression is so offensive:—“But let the sober and serious hour come, which sooner or later must come to all, the power of truth will soon prove *too strong for all that can be opposed to it*, and pierce into his heart,” which is pretty much the same thing as a man’s saying, that D. V. he intends to shave to-morrow morning with a razor, if he cannot lay hands on anything else;—with this gross difference, that the last man must be a wag, the other is not. Thus the circle is completed. For it is the abuse of this principle which constitutes the breach of the initial principle of integrity. If the predicate includes too many attributes, it cannot be applied *in its integrity* to implicate the subject. Thus “some anachronisms are solecisms” must be altered to the universal of “solecisms,” viz. “anomalies.” That being accomplished, it is the turn of the subject to raise the “some” to an “all,” and, by way of reversion upon that, it is for the predicate again to expand the inclusion, by assigning the differentia of anachronism, as, for example, thus: “All anachronisms are anomalous transpositions of different events in time.”

## 17.

Comprehensiveness may appear in two relations, besides that which it has to simple propositions. On the one hand, it may appear in the connection between propositions, and, on the other, in the connection between the clauses or sections of single propositions.

A transition is uncomprehensive when it shoots beside the mark—either over or under it. For example, it is so, when the occasion of anything is assigned as the cause. And, on the other hand, its want of comprehensiveness consists in placing together indefinitely, propositions, whose mediation, from one to the other, should be made explicit; as, for instance, in putting side by side, as parallel facts, circumstances, of which the one is the direct outcome of the other. In such a case, the writer often fails of being incisive, not because he mistrusts the severer connection, but because he does not see it at all: he does not shirk it, he misses it.

The proposition again, as divided internally, may be either a binomial, a trinomial, or a polynomial. (The monomial relation has been discussed in the preceding paragraph.) Thus:—"Endless are the purposes of men, merely festal, or merely comic, and aiming but at the momentary life of a cloud, which have earned for themselves the distinction and apparatus of a separate art." Here, in the first clause, "festal" and "comic" mark a bisection in the thought, and in the second, "distinction" and "apparatus." There is, however, an apparent trisection in the first, owing to the phrase, "and aiming," etc.; but that is the statement of a characteristic which is common to both "festal" and "comic," viz. their intrinsic levity. A perfect illustration of the threefold division is this:—

“From the first intermeddling of law with the movement of the higher moral affections, there is an end—to freedom in the act, to purity in the motive, to dignity in the personal relation ;” where there is given, first, the fact, next, its origin, and finally its result. The polynomial relation may be illustrated from this proposition:—“We glory in tribulations also—knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.” It is not hard to discover what is the critical point for comprehensiveness in such propositions, or what divisions are imperfect. It does not follow, that because a statement is broken up into sections, it is less comprehensive than a simple statement ; although it may happen that a threefold distribution is necessarily more comprehensive, because more economical, than a fourfold. What is required is, on the one hand, that the divisions shall not be elliptical—no polite proposition ever yawns to the extent of a third or fourth of its whole superficies. The principle of distribution must not be blind. On the other hand, the sections must not overlap each other. An impetuous writer, or one who writes for impression upon the common mind, is very apt to fall into slovenly modes of co-ordinating his ideas:—“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” The last clause contains a very happy antithesis, as summing up the virtues as they are in themselves, on the one hand, and as they are *for us*, on the other. And the same antithesis holds in the main division

of the first clause. Only there the separate phrases are very loosely connected; since there is no fundamental principle of division. And what holds for ordinary thought, holds also for poetry. It is true that Shakespere constantly multiplies metaphors; but only for the sake of intensifying an impression, by expounding it from different points of view, which is quite a distinct practice from trailing a mass of particulars in rag-tag-and-bobtail fashion after the main thought. For if a definite principle of division underlies the conception, any mere details are superfluous, and if not, they must be more or less arbitrary.

COR.—The general appearance of a comprehensive thought may be rendered appropriately by a very genial extension of the term *sententious*. The sentence is the full, rounded proposition; and whatever causes a thought to assume a robust appearance, is sententious. By the term generally is understood, whatsoever is characterised by this in excess. Accordingly all such writing is bombastic, and weak. But, in the milder sense of the term, all good writing is sententious, more or less; just in proportion as the thoughts of men who write carelessly give the idea of limpness, and a want of having come into being through resistance. Hence it happens that so much writing is unequivocally *flat*, and wanting in relief. It is not necessary that every thought should be epigrammatic in its setting; but it is indispensable that it should be analytically definite. This is the fundamental order of the sententious; and accordingly there is (1) the simple proposition; pure in the double sense of being undiluted, and free from extraneous matter. Thus: "No man escapes the contagion from contemporary bystanders." Of such, too, are all mathematical theorems, &c.: "The three angles of a triangle are

together equal to two right angles." (2) There is the proposition, with a clause qualifying the main idea. These sentences are formed in various ways, by augmenting, or limiting, or simply explicating, the primary thought. *E.g.* "Many of the inhabitants (and all those of respectability) subscribed to the fund."—"This is a paradox, only in the sense which makes it honourable to be paradoxical."—"Popularly, *i.e.* amongst the thoughtless, literature is held to include everything that is printed in a book." All good writing deals constantly with the relations of facts—their aim, origin, exceptions, circumstances, adverse influences, advantages, proportions, &c., &c. And as the vocabulary of a bad writer is indefinite, so is his grouping. (3) There is the proposition with an antithesis; *e.g.* "The possibility of selecting books wisely is becoming more hopeless, as the necessity for selection is becoming continually more pressing." A certain distrust might be attached to effects so glittering, were it not that these very effects are most exposed to criticism, where they have the chance of being most telling, and are most brilliant, when they found upon such principles of reciprocity as are logically the most just. And what becomes thus a habit of good writing is due to more dignified sources than literary knack and facility: it is engrained in the thinking. Such effects, of course, are the most elaborate; and many men write from year to year, without striking a single antithesis. This mode of setting the thought gains, accordingly, by comparison, while it cannot lose by any abuse that might be attempted.

## 18.

In so far as subtlety and comprehensiveness represent, the one the differential, the other the integral, in the variation of



terms, they are formally opposed to each other. But they are so distinguished from each other, just because they are correlative functions. The one takes up what the other leaves undone ; and where the one is active, the other is in abeyance. But this is only true formally. And in a very obvious sense, to integrate a term is to differentiate it, after a fashion, and to differentiate it is to integrate it. Alter a term in any way you please, up or down, and you must integrate its inclusion or its implication. And at the same time you have caused the meaning to *differ* from what it was a moment previously. Just in the same way it happens that a writer's totality of expression, forming an *integral* fact, becomes his *differentia* in regard to other individual writers. So long as comprehensiveness and subtlety are looked at apart from one another, each is seen to assume a characteristic form. But the one is involved in the other, and in practice this involution is of exceeding power and significance. There may be an isolated remark comprehensive, without being subtle, and *vice versa*. But there is no such thing as *continuous* expression that is comprehensive, without being subtle—although, of course, either quality can only be *illustrated* from individual expressions—and *vice versa*. For evidently, if everybody holds that all P is Q, you, who see that some P only is Q, must have embraced the rejected members of P with a grasp as comprehensive as that of any one else, as it is certainly more pertinent than that of every one else. And if, on the other hand, you embrace all P, as being implicated by Q, your subtlety must have co-operated to discover the principle upon which the outcast section of P has been fallaciously excluded from association with Q. Each quality is the exponent of the other.

The cattle are grazing,  
 Their heads never raising,  
 There are forty feeding like one.

What have we here—an image that is more comprehensive, or more subtle? Subtle it is to begin with, from the sudden combination of ideas—some P is some Q—that by and by diffuses itself like the dawn. For after the surprise, it is seen that there is no straining in the predicate, no spurious refinement, or discordance. It is at least generic in relation to animals as opposed to non-generic, and applies comprehensively to the subject;—some P is all Q. But is this not merely a vanishing picture, as applied to that predicate? The habit belongs, so far as we can recollect, to no other animal; but are cattle found feeding in such fashion so frequently, as to constitute it, for them, a habit? Surely—only some P is not all Q. This the comprehensiveness verifies, by summing up the occasions on which cattle have been remembered to graze in this manner, and mounts the proposition thus:—all P is all Q—the predicate being a proprium, not an accident. But now, again, are there not other animals besides cattle, which feed after this manner? No;—any S is not all Q. Sheep feed in numbers, too, and of all animals, therefore, most resemble cattle in that respect. But sheep do not feed “forty like one.” They lack the consentaneousness and repose of a herd of cattle feeding (and what, by the way, *is* the secret distinction between “flock” and “herd”?); their motion in feeding is a twitching, rather than a browsing; and some of them in a flock are always in impatient motion. This is distinction enough, and is the distinction indicated in the expression;—although the difference to the ear in the sound made by the different animals in feed-

ing might accentuate that distinction, and even if the spectator were removed out of hearing might associate itself with what he sees, especially if he is sensitive to the converse case, that, viz. of passing by a field after nightfall, when the cattle may be heard and not seen. And this distinction the comprehensiveness ratifies by showing the predicate to be the differentia, not applicable to the genus :—only P is all Q.

*Subtlety.*

1. Some P is some Q.
3. Only some P is not all Q.
5. All S is not all Q.

*Comprehensiveness.*

2. Some P is all Q.
4. All P is all Q.
6. Only P is all Q.

And conversely, instead of beginning with the negation of the proposition, no P is any Q (viz. some P is some Q), we may begin by negating the result attained in No. 6. Thus if we are told that only certain kinds of scientific men are the authorities on a subject, we may demur, by suggesting (1) that there may be others who have a claim to be heard, in fact (2) that all scientific men have an equal claim; further that the specialists are (3) not all competent upon the subject, but (4) that only some of them are competent; and finally, that (5) even these are more or less incompetent, because, as it turns out, this subject is not their subject, but one apart, so that (6) not one of them has a voice in the matter. Thus, the predicate being still quantified :—

*Subtlety.*

1. Only P is not all Q.
3. All P is not all Q.
5. Some P is not all Q.

*Comprehensiveness.*

2. All S is all Q.
4. Only some P is all Q.
6. No P is any Q.

Novelty is the hidden condition of comprehensiveness, just as truth is its overt condition. Certain principles, just by reason of their novelty and subtlety, tend to become commonplace. They are at first striking, and so come to be

in everybody's mouth, with the reversionary certainty of being the opposite of striking. In the same way it happens with figurative expressions. The simile about the lion shaking the dewdrops from his mane *once* was new. And for central Africa at the present moment undoubtedly it *is* new; that expression being understood to bring down the house nightly in the Theatre Royal of the Sahara. Only by and by it will come to the ears of the lions, who will grow sulky, and refuse to do the shake, and so the metaphor will be no longer true. But meantime, and for home consumption, the expression must be turned over to the wags, who will find plenty ways of applying it, so that it shall blossom like the apple-trees in spring. Otherwise, such expressions, being derived, involve no comprehensiveness on the part of the writer who uses them. A proverb is equally an exponent of comprehensiveness; which is a form of expression professing to be comprehensive, and not subtle; though it is not always what it professes to be, and when it is, that happens because it is subtle as well, *i.e.* is that which it does not profess to be.

COR.—Considered psychologically, and in a strict scientific sense, it is the union of subtlety and comprehensiveness which constitutes genius. The term may be used vulgarly to denote anything, from heat and clap-trap to a rhythmical felicity that is comparatively mechanical; and may be bent to suit a variety of descriptions, which are simply not quack definitions, because they do not pretend to be scientific. The term, as commonly used, is itself equivocal. A writer may quite well be distinct from the crowd, who is yet not to be classed with men of the highest power; and would not be so classed, even by those who confound under the one term

catholic power, and power that is merely eccentric. The men of true power have a bond drawing them together, and isolating them from men of the second class, *plus* their individuality. It is not individuality alone that constitutes genius. For manifestly, if A, B, and C, are all men of genius, there must be something *common* amongst them, just as if they are Chinese, there must be something common to them all, whether they wear pigtails or not. In itself, individuality is the most barren criterion that can be conceived; for being, in the abstract, common to them all, it denudes each of the writers of his common, *concrete* power; each man's individuality excludes that of his neighbour. That being the case, the distinction of genius between the mind of high originality and the ordinary mind, is just as peremptory between it and the middle-men or eccentrics. Which distinction is something of a definite intellectual cast. It is, therefore, co-present with genial power of whatever kind; and that not merely as an accompaniment, but as a substratum. No emotion can possibly be gauged, can possibly express itself in literature, except through some intellectual medium. Its force and delicacy are expounded by its comprehensiveness and subtlety. Nor is this a task to which language is unequal. Communication of such emotion, now ethereal, now masculine, is made every day; and with this proof of the infallibility of the medium, that *all* who read do not respond to the feeling, or respond to it in different degrees. Those who are affected by it are precisely those of whom we could predict that they should be affected; and those who are not, are precisely those in whom we have seen the want of capacity for appreciating it. The influence of emotion is, therefore, manifestly regulated by principle, precisely because it is not indiscriminate. It

might be thought, that the fact of a man's not having seen the emotional force of a passage, and apprehending it, upon re-reading the piece, were a proof of the insecurity of this mode of communication. It is in fact the very opposite; the mood simply has not been favourable at first for catching the peculiar sentiment; and the mode of transit would indeed be precarious if, when the emotions were inert, the piece *had* been adequately apprehended. Hence it is, that the reader recurs to the passage with undiminished pleasure. All of which depends upon the permanence of the intellectual coefficients. It is not merely that these include the principles of poetical genius, but that they allow for genius of the philosophic and scientific cast, as well as of the poetical;—and here is another source of equivocation, since so few people can square the idea of poetical genius with scientific, and most people when they talk of genius mean distinctively the former. The power, therefore, as not merely (1) concrete, and to be found in a man's individual expressions, but (2) specifically intellectual and constant, is (3) essentially recoverable by analysis, and to be measured in detail. It does not follow that because comprehensiveness and subtlety are not to be predicated of a man's style from single expressions, his genius can be determined without appraising these expressions. It is predicable in detail, provided you predicate in regard to a sufficient number of details. And just because it is so, the caution needs to be given at all regarding isolated expressions. These appear as particulars, and form the universal which we call genius, which, in so far, is *not* local or individual; only the specific form which realises the genius of each man in its individuality, is just that mode of expression under which the common element incarnates itself, in art and science.

## CHAPTER III.

### OF QUANTITY.

#### *Section I. The Principle of Quantity.*

#### 19.

A VERY important distinction exists in Style between thoughts as they are independently, and the same thoughts in a process. It holds both in relation to single propositions and to propositions in a series. So that, on the one hand, a series of thoughts may be regarded as containing propositions separately intelligible ; and, on the other, separate propositions may be regarded in relation to mutual reticulation or coherence, each of them being potentially a link or item in a series. For the distinctness or completeness of an idea is as necessary for progress as for positive disconnection—which in fact is just the difference between insulation and isolation : dig a trench across the home end of a peninsula, and you insulate it ; wash away the island now formed, from the side of the canal, till its diameter is less than the distance which divides it from the mainland, and you isolate it. And this progression to an indefinite extent, with transitions more or less severe and artistic, and appealing more or less to a chain of unexpressed connection, reposes upon a natural tendency to the evolution, more or less systematic, of one thought through the medium of another.

I apprehend that a person asked to discourse to an audience on landscape-gardening may formulate his subject as he pleases, may select for his text a fact, or a proposition, or a series of propositions, and may deliver accordingly an essay, a thesis, or a lecture. But, in either case, his very first movement towards an elucidation or confirmation of his theme is a departure from the position he has assumed. He cannot expound his subject by simply reiterating the phrase "landscape-gardening." He must proceed by beginning somewhere else. If he is simply obtuse, he will begin with a few general remarks on the interesting nature of the art. If he is pretentious as well as obtuse, he will grasp at futile analogies in the subject to landscape-painting, led thither by the coincidence of the term, and proceed to splice the two subjects according to the correspondence which he has clipped smooth for them. If he is a master, he will sever the subject in its differentia from the generic science of gardening, with a hint of its leaning to landscape to convey its affinities to the picturesque as well as the stubbornly useful in art. Nor does this happen from the common usage with regard to introductions and exordia. On the contrary, these are possible only through this principle of quantity; they derive their proportion to the whole theme entirely from it; and their abuse arises through an unseasonable extension of its peculiar functions. Not one of the propositions in the series may contain an expression implicating any of the terms in the text, and yet the whole may be a perfect exposition of it. Or the terms themselves may be expressed in every proposition of the discourse, and no illustration given of it whatever. Universally, therefore, it holds, that the secession of the expositor from his first posi-



tion is the first condition of his return to it; the fact being that the thesis, which henceforth is his *terminus ad quem*, is, for the moment of its being stated, his *terminus a quo*.

COR.—The practical conditions of all interesting thought are two, that it shall explicate truth, or make it impressive. In the one case, the communicator takes advantage of the obscurity of a principle, in the other of its simplicity; or rather he lessens or remedies the disadvantage attaching on the one hand to a truth that is profound, and on the other to one that is commonplace. Now to set the truth in its relations cannot be effected for either aim, unless he causes the parts of his exposition in detail to be apprehended mediately through each other. And since the separate propositions must precede or succeed one another in time, priority and subsequence become the exponent of relation in thought. For its own part, the principle overlooks all difference in the importance of individual thoughts. One idea may be worth in quality of suggestion all the rest put together; or it may be the sole unfertile thought in a series that is massively and resplendently suggestive. Its value for transition may or may not coincide with its intrinsic and independent value.

## 20.

By whatsoever laws of sequence in fact, or of analogy, or of logical consequence, a thought has reached its position in a series, it is the rule, that the truth which for the time being occupies the attention shall have an advantage over every other—an advantage immediate, in the way of excluding every other, an advantage derivative, in the way of suggesting others. It is a supplanter of every other truth to this extent, that any truth supplanting it shall do so only in virtue of the

relation of that truth to itself the proximate truth. Abdicating the throne, it has a right to name its successor; the chances being that this will be a relative, according to its force at the moment of resignation. That a certain range of thought has been in occupation for some time is a presumption that it will soon be displaced; its displacement, in fact, is rapidly being carried on. For each idea has two distinct values, a potential value, as a generating or multiplying source of ideas, and an actual, as a link in the development of a succession of ideas. The potential value, therefore, of such a chain of thought is being reduced with every successive proposition to actual value. And correspondingly its power of resistance to a possible succeeding series of thoughts is being reduced to zero—a process that, with discontinuous thinkers, goes on very rapidly.

The two factors requisite for systematic composition are physical energy and intellectual fertility. Nor will their conjoint operation be defeated, except on the suspension of the conditions under which the initial thought was generated. That suspension will be a mixed result from physical exhaustion, and a lack of that surplus fund of unorganized suggestions regarding the immediate theme, precisely to the extent that the potential energy, or the potential fund of illustration, has had demands made upon it. The resistance, in such a case, to the production of fresh thought would certainly be enormous. In fact, writing under such circumstances is quite exceptional. It is, however, the ordinary case which I contemplate, and precisely the opposite circumstances, viz., those in which the resistance arises from the tumult and redundancy of the thought. For every new idea operates by way of dis-

turbing existing relations. If these have been exhausted, it does not come a moment too soon. If not, it acts in the way either of delaying the development of the thought, or of precipitating it. A resistance has, in fact, been interposed which it was beyond its province to interpose, arising from weakness or impatience. And there are two factors, as *powers*, which are affected by a want of distribution of energy in the mental powers—the powers of suggestion and modulation; so that it is not so much they that are disturbed, as the process of combination which is disturbed, because they do not act in harmony. The fault may be a defect in either case. Or it may be an abnormal activity of the suggestive faculty, the elaborative faculty not being able to weave into shape the materials as they are passed back to it. Not that by any means this activity could be represented as so much surplus energy. It is the same force applied momentarily in a different direction; and viciously applied, because it is not distributed so as to sustain the modulating agency. Such action of the imagination is simply spasmodic, and just as much a sign of vigour as tetanus might be of muscular power. It is not enough, therefore, that the writer's force is at its maximum, it must also be, as to its two factors, *in equilibrio*. With diminished total energy a finer result will be attained, than with increased energy disproportionately applied. The moment any plethora is felt, the diastole begins to remedy the disturbance and restore the diminishing clearness. Otherwise not merely will some of the suggestions founder, but the elements which were about to consolidate in their totality will be dispersed. To obviate that, a cessation of the process is necessary, and a revision, to the extent that

the attention has failed in its first effort to meet its extra engagements—has failed to neutralize the resistance offered by the difficulties of the process augmented by the difficulties of the situation. The two functions must again concur in amending the relations of the thought to their mutual satisfaction. And they will do so in the converse order from that in which they concurred to fashion the combination which now they are called upon to reconstitute; each in that ratio being called out or withheld, in which, for the original draught, it had unduly been depreciated or exalted.

COR.—This tendency to disturbance exists in all composition, even the most negligent. And, properly controlled, it is the very springboard of effective composition. It is felt, therefore, most decidedly in the experience of the best writers, who precisely are those born with the best resources for managing it. A writer who has the advantage of a thinking that is highly complex, must share its partial disadvantages for rapid improvisation. His tendency is to involve fresh suggestions with every turn of his argument. But counterworking that, and with a view to the summary extinction of those interminable ramifications, which make it oftentimes uncertain what is the leading idea, is a regulative faculty, moving abreast of the tumultuary flux of ideas, and determining what phases of the thought are to be rejected, what subordinated, and what reserved for a more special expansion in arrears. His resource lies in the exceptional rapidity with which he is able to pass from the final adjustment of a thought to the rehearsal of an impending thought, and from the pioneer stage back into the complementary one of adjustment.

## 21.

The correspondences, which take effect in the relations of the suggestive and regulative faculties during composition, are founded on the reciprocity of relation between Quantity and Quality. It is self-evident, that you cannot connect two ideas unless they have some common tenor and significance (their quality), or, on the other hand, expound that relationship, unless both, and in their individuality (their numerical distinctness, their quantity), be co-present. For example, a historian, treating of the causes of a revolution, sums them up in three propositions. This has been accomplished by their mutual relevance, depending ultimately on their separate significance; which has been the agency in limiting them to that precise number as a maximum. The quality in this instance has determined the quantity. Suppose, however, that there could not have been less than three. In that case the effect depends upon the comprehensiveness of each of the three propositions; and quantity has become the exponent of quality. For if another writer requires a larger compass to produce three truths of equal dimensions, if his complete truths only alternate with partial truths, it is evident that the other is the more comprehensive thinker. If you allow an author to unite two propositions separately obvious, you may produce a subtle result. For by showing its unexpected relation to a principle, he may have glorified a fact which was commonplace, and even the principle, by developing unexpectedly its wealth of application. Or conversely, by reading into connection with other truths a truth that in isolation was original, you may make it commonplace. This proposition: "Fathers of the church are no more to be relied

on as authorities in doctrine than lay authors," is docked considerably as to its impressiveness by a preceding statement: "There have been many heterodox professors of divinity and freethinking bishops." The function of quantity is thus precisely to determine the *variation* of quality. For when I say that the one expounds the other, I do not mean by way of illustrating its brilliance; but simply that it enforces the other, whether in the way of magnifying or depreciating it—of showing it up as subtle or non-subtle, just according as it is either.

It is a most significant truth, that condensation is a test of high thinking, and for the profound reason, that it depends in such great measure on the quality of the thinking. An accidental advantage, therefore, it is not; nor one arising where, we might imagine, it could best be dispensed with; but one arising from necessity, since it is precisely vast combinations that are the most subtle, exquisite transitions that are the most just. A great writer is dissatisfied with such relations as do *not* cause his meaning to subtend a definite angle in the preceding thought. The inferior writer has usages of transition known only to himself. When he is at a loss for a connection, he simply couples his ideas formally together as one, two, three, without troubling himself to ascertain what cross-division he may have made, or whether there is any coherence in his chain of thought at all. Strictly speaking, these are transitions only in the sense that creeping is walking. That he does not write very much absolute nonsense is just owing to this, that he evades definite logical forms of articulating his thoughts. It is not that, having to use the looser forms of transition, he has no occasion for those that are more severe, but that, being illogical, he instinctively

evades them. For confine him entirely to these formulæ, and you will find not that he braces himself up correspondingly to wield them, but that he will commit himself more than ever; so closely does the sharpness of a man's transitions depend upon his logical sagacity. Making an infrequent use of certain forms of combination in his ordinary composition, he makes inevitably a disproportionate use of those which remain; thus inverting the practice of all conscientious artists, which is to apply with discrimination the most telling transitions, by continually turning over the whole complement of transitions.

COR.—The functions of Quantity and Quality, in their interconnection, form the essential principle of what we mean by Style. The varieties of imagery and mood are quite secondary. It is not that these primary distinctions are abstract principles, on which the others may rest theoretically; nor merely that they are vital functions, with which the varieties of expression may coalesce and interpenetrate. They are superlative *facts* in all composition. The more catholic, therefore, a style is—the more it relies upon sound and original thinking, and rapid precision of movement—the less it is imitable; in part, because it is wanting in the mere vividness and the mere agility of the secondary attributes of expression (and which alone can be imitated), and in part because it depends on an organic force that is incommunicable. Hence another secret of the vulgarity of imitation; for a man can only copy that which is extra-essential, whether existing in or out of connection with what is really vital. Hence, too, the utter impotence of charging plagiarism upon a style that resembles another, so long as the coincidence is in the cardinal functions; as if by possibility any writer

could counterfeit a manner that is essentially inimitable, and as if it were not a libellous misreading of his independent merits to suppose him coveting what, being incommunicable from himself, he must first have divorced from his own manner in order to counterfeit.

*Section II. Of Extension.*

22.

Since the proposition is for Style the unit of length, it must internally be complete. Directly or indirectly it takes part in propagating the thought; and *ex hypothesi* is an integral portion of the whole series. Every such unit, whether disinterestedly, and for the welfare of the series, or selfishly, and as having a stake in the total application of the line of thought, is compelled to be distinct, and to realise a specific identity, with whatsoever detail it may be expressed in the text, or in whatsoever variety of form it might otherwise be expressed. There can be no range of thought so great, as to extend the unit of length in proportion, nor any so short, as to diminish the necessity for insulating each proposition.

The onus of bearing the thought may be shared by the subordinate members of a proposition, but only in so far as they help to preserve its unity. It need not be simple; but it must be single. This unity is the necessity for expression, into whatever complexity a thought may run. A man may wish to compose a sentence of hyperbolical length, but unless he writes nonsense he does not lose the unity; so long as he continues to add to the sentence, he is simply deferring it; and his subordinate ideas themselves will be capable each of being explicated into a totality similar to that which he is seeking to evade.



COR.—As the basis of Quality in Style is the same as that of logical Quantity, so *the basis of Quantity in Style is identical with that of Quality in Logic*. Every thought fully mounted for transition has first a distinct meaning, in order that it may have a direction, or what is technically called a drift, whether it is to be regarded as a synthesis of compatible elements, or a disjunction of elements that analytically are involved in each other. Every proposition depends, therefore, for its coherence on the *copula*, no matter whether that be negative or positive.

## 23.

The principle of movement in composition is from one complete proposition to another, and so on indefinitely, provided the nexus is preserved between each. Every proposition thus becomes alternately complementary to that which precedes and that which follows. The two conditions of this movement are, positively, that of advance, and, negatively, that of connection. Mere succession without connection is not progress. Discoursing on it matters not what, I announce, first, “that in savage times men are much more liable wantonly to provoke each other to bloodshed than in civilised times,” and, next, “that we are at present in the middle of harvest.” Now a first thought, in relation to any theme whatsoever, is excused from being directly in connection, on the express understanding that it will take the first chance of ingratiating itself with something that will lead it into that connection. Instead of that, in this instance, it is as far from the possible theme as ever, and, together with proposition No. 2, the exponent of a principle that would reduce all expression to a series of detached remarks, relevant

to nothing, and as rigorously introductory to nothing. The position of the thought is constantly shifting, and so rapidly, as to make it impossible to say at what angle the new idea meets the old. The vice of the case lies in its being merely the repetition of the *initial principle*. We do not advance, simply because we are always beginning; and, unless we connect, we never get beyond that beginning.

But it does not follow, on the other hand, that if we state the same proposition over again with a little variation, we are fulfilling the law of connection which is outraged in setting side by side two disjunct ideas. For in such a case it is evidently the minimum of variation which ought to be aimed at. And it is impossible to multiply to any extent the circumstantial variations of the same substantial thought, even if that were of any use. But this is just what is demanded, viz., that the same idea shall be reiterated indefinitely (short of absolute repetition), so as not to encroach upon the identity of any other thought. Now certain thoughts allow of no permutation; absolute truths have little patience for being tampered with. And the writer will find that, with every succeeding change of his capital theme, he is further from the identity he had agreed to preserve, and more and more in league with the difference which he was committed to avoid. So far, in fact, from evading the impropriety of advance without connection—which was proved to consist in repeating merely the initial impulse—this is a gross aggravation of it, the truth being that the initial movement is repeated, and with staleness of matter superadded to sameness of principle.

An abrupt transition is quite a common thing in writing. Thus: "The prisoners having no other refuge, saw one in the sea. The weltering billows might at least hide them

from their enemies; those hellish faces through the gathering mists of death they might at least shut out. Not so: not thus were they to be dismissed. The Syrian sea is an inhospitable chamber of the great central Christian lake." Understood in its possible relation to what goes before, this last sentence, so abrupt, cannot have any reference to the change of death as affected by the volition of the prisoners. If drown these wretches must, the more turbulently hostile the sea, the better—the more in secret friendly to their melancholy purpose, the more solicitous to their despairing mood. The sentence, therefore, can only indicate either compassion on the part of the captors, or sarcasm on the writer's part at their meditating some more elaborately cruel form of death for the prisoners than suffering them to drown themselves. In the context, however, it runs:—"Nothing rose to view but a barren rock," to which, in the sequel, the captives swam out; and being recalled under promises of amnesty for the past, were treacherously massacred. The reference points onward, then, to the sheltering rock, not to the devouring waves—the sea was hospitable to the extent of providing a rock; and it was in spite of its general inhospitality, and not because of it, that the catastrophe was deferred. The transition is virtually the same with the principle of the initial movement in any piece of composition. Meantime, its relation to what succeeds is certain; and it is only by picking up the connection to windward of the spot where the thought flagged and faltered in tacking, that we are able to ascertain what advance has been made. Even here it is true that there is no advance without connection, where the one is precocious and the other dubious.

The advance from general inhospitality to the barren rock is only from a principle to a detail, or, if you prefer it, from a rule to an exception—according as you find it in or out of keeping with the shabbiness of the coast. And as to the connection, what angle of incidence is that, to which for the life of us we could not adjust our instruments, without an interregnum of confusion or suspense between alternative issues? How of all modes of transition should that be the coryphæus and the nonpareil? There are two criteria of progress in composition—advance in logic, and advance in information; which may be directly or inversely as each other. Meantime it is sufficient that all advance in logic is directly and not inversely as logical connection. What we mean by reason and consequent is the recognition, in abstract speech, of a universal fact in nature; and to *express* the relation between them is impossible except by assuming their duality. We say accordingly: I strike this match, *and therefore* it begins to blaze. The matter we may know to be identical; but it is the *form*, by which expression is bound, both fore and aft, with a necessity as eternal as its inability to fix by any fraction of a second the instant in which the one phenomenon shoots into the other amidships. But what become the forms of a material substance, under various conditions in nature, are just the material for a formal existence like expression. Being distinct as forms of a common fact or substance in the physical world, they are distinct as separate facts, in the world of expression, under a common form. The two stand to each other conversely: advance in the natural sphere being from phase to phase, in the formal, from ultimatum to ultimatum, and the nexus in the natural sphere being one of material, in the

other one of form. Hence the nexus in the illustration is absolute, founding on physical identity. And similarly, the advance is absolute, from the one idea to its companion. It would be impossible to gauge any degree of advance, without assuming some standard of connection, by which it might be expounded. And consider simply how fiercely hostile two things must be, which, in spite of so perfect a nexus, are yet distinct. Real connection, therefore, being removed as far from *total* identity as from total difference, it is self-evident, that real advance is as far from total difference as from total identity.

COR.—There is no *prerogative* mode of transition in style, any more than there is a prerogative velocity of descent for a heavy body, falling a hundred feet, over a light one. Each is indispensable for its own special function. Nevertheless as the ponderous body will create more heat when it strikes the earth than the light body, so a series of thoughts, with a single order of interconnection (if such a thing were possible), would be more or less rigorous than another, provided the principle of connection there were uniform also. Most passages therefore, and all of any length, exhibit an average cohesion in their transitions.

## 24.

The necessity, for composition, of a *duality* of ideas to act in combination is also its limit. The principle of extension in thought has nothing to do with an indefinite series of ideas, except by way of providing the elementary conditions of each. In the middle, or at the end, the series does no more than repeat its experiences at the beginning: it is simply the bridge of which these are the arches. It is not they, there-

fore, that are subdivisions from the series, but the series which is an accumulation of such integral portions. And in every case of transposition or transformation of the larger masses, it is they that regulate the result—not they through any section or whole, but the section through them.

In the process, which in composition is continually going forward, of alternate grasping and releasing by the attention—grasping that it may release, and releasing that it may grasp—the motion of style is necessarily modified by the number of ideas that can be received at the same moment in sufficient force to be co-ordinated. The process is one taking place with the full consciousness of the writer. But concurrently with this, there may be a subconscious process, moulding the thought as a whole into conformity with one dominant idea, not dispersed through the thoughts separately, but secretly determining the bias of all. These influence each other very greatly; it depends, for example, on the rigid connection of its members, that a train of thought completes its curriculum round a given centre, so as to produce a symmetrical result; and on the stability of its focus (which may be complex, but must be distinctly conceived), that a series of ideas forms a recognisable whole. What, therefore, in theory is the evolution of a determinate conception through its separate phases, is in practice the setting of these into mosaic—the conscious formation of successive details to a totality subconsciously fixed, subconsciously regulative. That totality, having been reached, may be regarded consciously as a whole; in which event the principle is reversed, the totality is recognized explicitly, and the details implicitly. Such a mode of regarding the effect of

a piece of composition is, therefore, the exact converse of the stylistic. Style, being concerned with the process of movement, has nothing to do with results. In its own way, it has accounted for every item in the whole composition—for every slide and pirouette, for every jerk and oscillation—not a crevice remains for explanation. Any other mode of explaining the facts must transcend style, and *ex hypothesi* cannot be stylistic; it is simply rhetorical. Now evidently the same function, which deals with the effect of the sections of a piece, deals *a fortiori* with the totality of the piece. And the rhetorical relation of any piece being that in which it is a universal, and the stylistic that in which it is regarded in its particulars, the same rhetorical function, which treats of every complete piece in relation to its sections, treats also of these in relation to their subsections, and mediately to the individual reticulations of the latter in style.—Another mode of viewing a passage, quite distinct from either of these, but rhetorical also in its application, is by estimating its general brilliance of connection. “Most passages, and all of any length, exhibit an average cohesion in their transitions.” But the total estimate in such a case founds solely on the aggregation of individual brilliances, separately noted in any review for purposes of style.—Casually, of course, the last thought of a section may inosculate as closely with the first of the succeeding one, as if the latter were simply a continuation of the self-same idea. Indeed the more closely a writer mediates his thoughts the one through the other, in relation to the total idea, there will be the more difficulty in determining where his new sections begin, apart from some mechanical device for advertising such a transition. Which artificial device,

as we have it now-a-days, is quite inadequate to distinguish the hierarchies of articulation, of section and subsection; and is in fact often misleading, because it confounds what is co-ordinate with what is subordinate. But a writer has no business to play fast and loose with the one distinction that is recognized so sacredly, that viz. between the section and the proposition. He may, if he likes, turn a waggon-load of small paragraphs into one, with a view to keeping the resources of the paragraph for the grouping of the larger masses of his thought. But in that case, he ought to be the very last person who should wish to distribute one section into two. It is very ungenteel to straddle back against a door-post, one leg in the room, and the other in the lobby. Indefeasibly his section is one and continuous, notwithstanding the mechanical division. And when a French novelist writes: "Jacques could not collect his thoughts—Why?—He was mad,"—in three parallel lines, we pass it without remark, because it is too furious an exaggeration to be harmful, or to escape anybody's notice. On the other hand, when a section opens, for example, with a "therefore," we take the first conception to be a resultant of the preceding section as a whole, and not of its last proposition. If the two sections are specifically unconnected in their drift, our author should either give a different turn to the inaugural proposition, or omit it altogether.

COR.—No writer holds more than one total thought at a time in relation to any other, whether that be one already completed, or one that suggests itself as the resolution of the thought under formation. This number is a constant in all composition. Any variation between man and man occurs in two ways. In the one instance, it depends upon the rapidity



with which the individual composes. In the other, it depends on the complexity of the conception. Virtually there is often a plurality of suggestions moving abreast at once, and threatening to break the critical nexus; and there arises a counteracting force, not to extend the limit, however, but to cause the thoughts to travel backwards and adapt themselves to it. The machinery, by which the attention is thus virtually expanded, and the volume of the thought increased, is that of Intension.

*Section III. Of Intension.*

25.

There are certain relations (such as that of cause and effect), to which, from their essential coherence, it is indifferent *per se* whether they shall be expressed in one proposition or in two. These are of a bivalvular form, that no compression will hide, and no extension disunite. In the second place, there are many thoughts which are indivisible, and can only be stated independently; for example, "The rate of discount varies with the degree of commercial prosperity." But finally, there are certain conceptions, which cannot adequately be expressed, unless their special relation is expressed *within* the proposition; whose totality is not complete, is not significant, without a limitation. They resemble the second class of ideas, in so far as they are formally single; but are unlike, in so far as they approximate to being substantially dual propositions. And it is in this latter point that they resemble the first class, while they differ from that by not containing their two factors in the same exact equilibrium. By way of illustration, I may say, with reference to the distinction in

point, "This class of marsupial propositions resembles the first, only in so far as it approximates to a division of substance;" and virtually I have expressed by intension all that could be expressed by extending the position into a separate phrase.

If you assert, without its accompanying limitation, the fact that "all persons holding property exercise the right of suffrage, except women," you assert what is false. If again it is expressed thus, "No women have the right of suffrage," the fact of the exception is still omitted; and there is an appeal made to the imagination of the reader to supply what is involved, viz. that every one else has it. Which appeal is either premature or gratuitous; since if the reader does not know anything about the fact, he will not gain it from such a bare statement; and if he does know it, and all that remains is to insist upon it oratorically, you forego the chance of parading it with that special emphasis which the discarded relation expressly secures. The thought thus being coaxed into a simple proposition, there flies into the wilderness the very point of having a complex formula. Nor, if you express it in a double proposition, will you whistle your hawk back from the wilderness. For express yourself thus: "All men have the right of suffrage—but women have it not,"—and it will be evident that you have simply adjusted the two facts *as particular to particular*. And meantime, the logical principle, which is radiantly acknowledged in the proposition as it stood originally, and of whose organic force this is the complete abnegation, is that of the *universal to the particular*. This form of statement has its own use in the economy of transitions. By which I mean to infer, that it only comes into collision with other

forms, upon a question arising of differential propriety. And on the other hand, I infer that it is liable to be drawn into spurious comparisons, by the perversions or neglect of its own principle—by a writer's treating, as if it were subordinate, what is of cardinal import, and using the machinery of inter-propositional connection for what is strictly intra-propositional.

COR.—Even in a mere literary fashion, the principle of subordination is of use to preserve the thought against diverging from the main issue. Were there no such resource, co-ordinate and subordinate relations would be confounded together. And consequently, it relieves the pressure that otherwise must overtake the function of simple transition; especially where the new limb of the proposition expresses no specific limitation, but a casual addition to the thought. Thus in reporting on the fact that Major X. (who had recently returned to this country from the East) was about to publish a volume of travels, the parenthetical clause is admissible, which would have been out of place as an independent truth between that fact and the disjunct fact, that the Major's experiences had extended over a great number of years. Indeed it would be admissible even as a separate fact (*e.g.* Major X. is about to publish a volume of travels—He has lately returned from the East) provided something else be put in the stead of the third sentence; upon the principle that you may ask a person to dine with yourself and a confidential friend, whom you would not ask to dine with your friends promiscuously. Hence another value of the process of subordination, as an alternative mode of *varying* the form of transition—the first form in which the illustration stood being a variety of the last—apart from the resource of making the clausal

addition in any thought the specific link of connection between it and the next.

## 26.

Some machinery, then, must plainly be devised for incorporating into a proposition, without offence, collateral or supplementary statements, that, if explicated in full, would disturb the principle of progression, and for recognising as subordinate those which perforce had incorporated themselves in the uncompleted thinking. Statements there are, which may be preserved as additions, without encumbering the conception, and be identified with it, without abating their significance. The abuses of the process are threefold. (1) The apparatus of subordination may be applied to an idea which ought to be explicated in full further on, perhaps with a whole flourish of pendants of its own. (2) There is the case in which a suggestion is introduced, hanging merely by some happy-go-lucky connection, or quite irrelevant. Greater laxity is allowed to a subordinating principle than to one of co-ordination. But whatever tells in the case of the one tells in a corresponding degree in the case of the other. (3) There is a chance of the principle of the minor clause being indefinitely repeated. This is the chief danger. And it is this which makes any exaggeration of the others so much to be dreaded: in the second instance, it would be to add irrelevance to irrelevance, impertinence within impertinence. The abstract ideal and the practical, with regard to the statement of relative truth, have no such intimate connection with each other, as in the case of the integral statement of truth absolute. A single statement of truth in the abstract, that should include in it implicitly every other truth, would be essentially compendious.

A single statement of truth in its subordination—in its processions and divisions, its oppositions and concessions—would include every express relation of every truth to every other: it would be essentially panyclopædic. The attention could not yield to the strain for a moment; it would not even try to prefigure the eternally advancing, eternally receding conclusion. It bends, therefore, to the same limitations in intension as in extension. Being flushed from the primary thought, and overflowing, it returns to fill the *lacuna* which it had anticipated in the thought that succeeds; its practical limit not interfering with, but specifically enhancing any purposes of literary propriety—of perspicuity, or economy, or elegance.

The medium for the distribution of the energy of subordination in thought is again the faculty of attention. It is not attention, however (any more than in the preceding case), in the sense of that which is exhausted during the evolution of thought, and every exertion of which involves a separate decrement in the stock of available energy. For so far as exhaustion goes, it does not matter to the reader whether that is effected by fifty curt propositions, or by twenty voluminous ones. Fatigue is no independent criterion, therefore; and even as a symptom it is inconstant and precarious. Moreover, its degree, when it does move in an appreciable ratio, is itself otherwise predetermined, viz. by the intellectual conditions for apprehending rapidly the bearing of a new thought, and for sustaining it without impatience through its development to its technical sublation in the thought which succeeds. It is not attention in its length that is meant, but in its breadth—the capacity for holding a number of conceptions simultane-

ously, so as to form a unity, varying in complexity according to the clearness with which these may be combined.

COR.—The principle of certain writings conducted apparently in defiance of this limit is really exoteric. The structure of law documents is often according to a coarse and very different method. The various clauses, instead of being embraced in a unity of consciousness, are held together in the *memory*. This, psychologically, is the distinction; the unity in transition being often merely arbitrary and precarious.

## 27.

Every proposition must be either simple or complex. If simple, however, it may be so by having rejected the chance of forming a member of a complex proposition; and if complex, it may be so by refusing to have its members scattered into separate propositions. The permutations, according to which the several limbs of an original complex thought may be arranged, are very numerous. Only each of these, as ultimately placed, is still one of the two alternative forms, either a simple thought or a compound, and is alternatively that which it is, by having refused to incarnate itself under the correlative form. This is the simple case, in which the reader sees all the apparent alternatives spread out on the page before him at once. Nor is it worth while inquiring particularly into the hidden alternatives;—what might have happened, viz. in the way of *suppression*, before the thought was permitted to stand as it is. All that moves agreeably to the same principles. So in the case of revision: if a new thought is to be admitted, it must be either as an integral fact, or as a fact in affiliation with some other fact (must be a leading fact, or a secondary, or an offshoot again from that), whether it be

as a total increment, or as a substitute for some other fact that has been suppressed. Any alteration must take effect either (1) by way of addition, or (2) by way of retraction, or (3) of both combined, the new fact being promoted *vice* the previous fact superannuated.—Even here of course there is a mode of keeping the thought in life, viz. the appendix, or note; which may radiate from the original suggestion of the text at various angles, and with varying degrees of importance. Only its scope is limited; otherwise, upon the same principle, a succession of notes, taking off from each other, might be continued *ad infinitum*. And besides, exhibiting in itself the same principles of composition which govern the primary text, the note has no special value as illustrating how these work.—So far there is nothing to alter—to multiply or diminish—the forms under which the result must appear. But these processes throw a very searching light upon the secret rationale of variety in composition, and a very significant one upon the reciprocal relations of transition and subordination. Interpose a thought between two complex thoughts, and possibly you will attract the allegiance of their near members to itself, transmuting what is left into a simple transitional phase from an ultra-transitional. Eliminate a proposition, and the thoughts, between which it has stood, may coalesce. Each resultant form, however, will still arise, just by rejecting the form in which it would not be what it is. This simply is the differential principle in Quantity, which by the side of Quality is too apt to appear flaccid and meagre, and which these external modes of variation tend vastly to enhance and expound, by illustrating the organic nature of transitional connection.

To say that one thought may influence the form of

another standing in connection with it, is to say nothing. It gives no clue to the degree or the kind of variation which may be involved. For, transition being known to be the most important matter in composing, we should each of us naturally incline to look upon any modification arising within that as very trifling. And as a rule it is so: so long as the change descends upon the subordinate clauses it is inconsiderable. "An immense majority of the Roman people never lighted a candle, unless sometimes in the early dawn. And this custom was the custom of all nations that lived round the Mediterranean." Let the final clause be eliminated from the first proposition, and it will make no difference to the connection of the two sentences; since the reference in the latter is to the rule, not to the exception. Upon the same principle, the corresponding clause in the text of this sentence, which I have suppressed, *ought* to be superfluous. "The daylight furnished gratis was certainly undeniable in its quality. . . . Seneca even in his own luxurious period called those men by ugly names who lived chiefly by candle-light." Yet no; there is a hiatus. For why "ugly"? Because the men were too ugly themselves to come abroad in the day-time, or because they were luxurious, or perhaps because they were candle-making, which being such a public disgrace, itself required to be prosecuted by artificial (to wit candle) light? For no such reason, but for one more obvious, yet still puzzling, because one of *several* more or less obvious reasons,—which is supplied by the intercalated phrase, "quite sufficient for all purposes that were *honest*." The difference of variation in the first instance is at its minimum, in the other at its maximum, the complex proposition in the one case being



virtually a simple thought, in the other virtually a dual.

Now let both clauses, instead of being suppressed, undergo the other change, that of elevation into an independent thought. Immediately the values are reversed. The subordinate member of the first instance is seen to be incompatible with the seriousness of the transition that is made to rest upon it; while, in the other case, the alteration makes very little real difference. The degree of variation is now at its maximum in the first case, and at its minimum in the second.

The difference of variation, therefore, exists at a maximum or a minimum, according as in each case the alternative orders of circumstance take effect; the same condition in either producing the opposite result to that which it produces in the other, and the same ratio of effect being produced in the one as is produced by the opposite condition in the other. The general principle, however, is (1) that of intermodification (and not of suppression), and (2) that of a maximum change under such intermodification—a subordinate clause being raised to the rank of a separate proposition. Now if this is the ordinary case, it will not do simply to say that one proposition affects the form of its neighbour; which implies that the change is quite inconsiderable. Especially the degree of the variation requires to be specified, when it is the exception to the second rule that is to be taken into account, and the change is a minimum, the subordinate clause being virtually a co-ordinate already, and benefiting little by its promotion. Still more peremptorily does the *nature* of the variation require to be adjusted, when (the first law being violated) it

is a suppression, and not a mere alteration of form ; since that suppression brings this last exceptional minimum change of the subordinate clause to the normal maximum, and the first normal maximum change to an exceptional minimum. It would be utterly vain, therefore, to look in the mere form of a proposition for a clue to its transitional value ; and just for this reason, that there are only the two forms—compromise between them there is none. No more palpable distinction of form can exist between a pot with a handle and a pot without. And it is all the more readily assumed, that the substantial value of each is uniformly the same ; while none could be more equivocal. Meantime, the possible modification that may be produced by one proposition upon another is modification enough ; in the first instance the sentence following the clause “unless perhaps,” etc., determines that that clause, if introduced, shall not be co-ordinate with it, but must be subordinate to the preceding thought ; and in the second instance, the subordinate clause determines that the succeeding proposition shall not supplant it, but must stand apart.

COR.—The interaction of the two fundamental processes in composition is the ground not more of certain average effects in style, than of certain broad differences. No man writes without using both ; but they may be used in different proportions, so as to distinguish even diverse nationalities. And a tariff might even be fixed for certain artificial stimulants, according to the results of their physiological action upon the several processes of composition. The effect of wine, for example, appears to be that of inducing a more brusque and discontinuous mode of writing, and to discourage a more

elaborate style of movement, the tendency to which is doubtless exaggerated by opium.

More immediately, however, the power of literary condensation depends upon a knowledge of the manner in which these processes mutually affect each other. Most people seem to think that the way to condense is by suppression. Let a writer run his pen through a sentence here, and a clause there, and he does all that is required. Especially, it would be said, let the carnage descend most heavily on the clauses. Now really it is not the derivative and parenthetical clauses that harbour diffuseness, but the garrulous or querulous iteration of the same truth in successive propositions. Nevertheless let the clauses be thinned out. And let your redundant main propositions be dismissed at the same time. But now, where many people imagine the work of compression to be over, the important part of it is just beginning. Only instead of commencing with the secondary clauses, we commence with the primary; and instead of lessening the number of subordinations, we increase them, by making the co-ordinate propositions coalesce, and subordinating one to the other.

All practical instruction in the art of composition flows naturally out of these principles. As for mechanical criteria, they are of no use. Direct the tyro to write in long sentences, or in short sentences, and you tell him nothing. There may be more difference between two short propositions than between a short and a long. A thought, for example, with a significant exception attached to it, and that turns back upon itself at a very acute angle, may make more demand upon the attention than one which carries the leading idea through a whole series of antistrophes. To talk of brevity, with a distinction like that concealed under it, is to give no hint of the

real case, to a pupil who measures results by the square foot, and possibly to encourage a vicious style of writing, by leaving him to suppose that one curt proposition is as good as another. Now a *staccato* movement of thought is not merely one of the most offensive, but specifically the most unpromising of all the modes of composition. In its own degree the most lively, it is in continuity the most monotonous. And in a higher sense it is vicious, because it generates irreflection; which is a vice, just in proportion as the majority of truths are relative. The most effective mode of statement is that of a truth in its relations. Accordingly your true rhetorician aims chiefly at such results, not because they are the most elaborate, or the most uncommon, but simply because they are the most telling. Fantasias he can spin by the hour, when the mood impels him, but his preference is for a severer brilliance. He trusts, for his music, to precision, and, for his artistry, to the rigour of his proportions. It is here that your ordinary rhetorician discovers another weakness. Having finished his tale of short propositions, he thinks to take it out in long boa-constrictor periods, with a good deal less of the fantasia, and a very great deal more of the spinning. For as there are effects of the turkey-cock order, so there is a class of people who go about gobbling upon a very limited amount of provocation—afflicted with a sort of sodden enthusiasm, borrowed from the memory of platform excitement, or from imitations of such memories. Now the undulation and the swoop, the strenuousness and the ease, which ought to mark the rhetorical wave are in general all very well—for the sea. Nevertheless, if his foam does not look like lather, nor the movement of the water betray a surreptitious besom—so long as his waves slop and lunge, and rally for an

instant before the fall, and flounce over in mist and thunder—a man does well. And unquestionably, even a pretentious effect is not nearly so bad as the practice of involution, when carried to an excess. For that there is no defence. Nevertheless, it may arise sometimes from an exceptional power of manœuvring complicated truth, and not from slovenliness, which in literature is often a species of locomotor ataxy. And for that reason it is not to be regarded as something very heinous by the side of the tendency to extreme brevity. Of the two it is that which promises best for amendment; since the positive tendency in it is more easily checked than the partial tendency in the other is likely to be developed. This is true, however, only so long as each is regarded specifically as a tendency: as an intermittent effect the subsultory order of proposition is of great use, but the other never. And *this* is the rationale of the value of the short proposition generally, as opposed to the long, either *per se* being indifferent—viz. that as an effect alternating with a proposition of moderate length, it is better than the other; it behaves better in combination. But it is not the normal proposition; that is calculated from the medium, not from either extreme. The proposition of medium length is the constant, and is relieved most effectively by the one variable which is *not* the most cumbrous; upon the same principle that, in waltzing, it is better for a man—he being the active or determining force—to have a partner shorter than himself, rather than one who is proportionately taller.



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